

the former be spread all over the world while the latter are no more !

The Divine vengeance hath not only punished nations for their cruelties to the Jews, but hath likewise pursued even single persons who have been their persecutors and oppressors. The first-born of Pharaoh was destroyed, and he himself, with his host drowned in the Red Sea. Most of those who oppressed Israel in the days of the Judges came to an untimely end. Nebuchadnezzar was stricken with madness, and the crown was soon transferred from his family to strangers. Antiochus Epiphanes died in great agonies, with ulcers and vermin issuing from his body; so that the filthiness of him not only became intolerable to his attendants, but even to himself. Herod, who was a cruel tyrant to the Jews, died in the like miserable manner. Flaccus, governor of Egypt, who barbarously plundered and oppressed the Jews of Alexandria, was afterwards banished and slain. And Caligula, who persecuted the Jews, for refusing to pay Divine honour to his statues, was murdered in the flower of his age, after a short and wicked reign.

But, since the Jews have absolutely rejected the gospel, and been no longer the people of God, there have not been any visible manifestations of a Divine interposition in their favour. As a punishment for their infidelity they have, for many years past, been dispersed all over the world without having either a temporal or a spiritual protector. They are detested in all parts where they inhabit, and are the universal scoff and ridicule of the people of all nations.

Another most distinguished and memorable instance of the truth of prophecy is, the desolation of Judea. This prophecy was foretold so long ago as the time of Moses, *I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you; and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste*, Levit. xxvi. 33. It was likewise foretold by the prophet Isaiah, who (speaking, as prophets frequently did, of things future as present) says, *Your country is desolate, your cities are burnt with fire; your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate as overthrown by strangers. And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city*, Isaiah i. 7, 8, 9. This last passage may immediately relate to the times of Ahaz and Hezekiah; but it must have a farther reference to the devastations made by the Chaldeans, and especially by the Romans. In this sense it is understood by most antient interpreters; and the following words imply no less than a general destruction, and almost total excision of the people, such as they suffered under the Chaldeans, but more fully under the Romans; *Except the Lord of Hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah*.

The same thing is expressed or implied in other places: and hath not the state of Judea now for many ages been exactly answerable to this description? That a country should be depopulated, and desolated by the incursions and depredations of foreign armies is nothing wonderful: but that it should lie so many ages in this miserable condition is more than man can

foresee, and be could revealed only by the Divine will.

The long wretchedness of the land of Judea in being forsaken by its original inhabitants and left desolate and uncultivated, has furnished some arguments for such as are enemies to the Christian religion. They say that, so barren a country could never have been *a land flowing with milk and honey*, nor have supplied and maintained such multitudes as it is represented to have done. But they do not see or consider, that hereby the prophecies are fulfilled; so that it is rather an evidence for the truth of our religion, than any argument against it.

If we may believe the concurrent testimony of those who best know it (namely, the people who inhabited it) the land of Judea was formerly a good and fertile country. Both Aristeas and Josephus speak largely in commendation of its fruitfulness: and tho' something may be allowed to national prejudices, yet they would hardly have had the confidence to assert a thing, which all the world could easily contradict and disprove. Nay there are even heathen authors who bear testimony to the fruitfulness of the land: tho' we presume, that after the Babylonish captivity it never recovered to be again what it was before. Strabo describes indeed the country about Jerusalem as rocky and barren, but he commends other parts, particularly about Jordan and Jericho. Hecataeus (quoted by Josephus) giveth it the character of one of the best and most fertile countries. And Tacitus saith, that it raineth seldom, the soil is fruitful, fruits abound as with us, and besides them the balsam and palm trees.

And notwithstanding the long desolation of the land, there are still visible such marks and tokens of fruitfulness, as may convince any man that it once deserved the character, which is given of it in the sacred writings.

To satisfy those who may be doubtful of the truth of this assertion, we shall take notice of the observations made by r. Maundrell and Dr. Shaw, two ingenious travellers of our own nation. The first of these says, " All along this day's travel from Kane Leban to Beer, and also as far as we could see round, the country discovered a quite different face from what it had before; presenting nothing to the view in most places, but naked rocks, mountains, and precipices. At sight of which, pilgrims are apt to be much astonished and baulked in their expectations; finding that country in such an inhospitable condition, concerning whose pleasantness and plenty they had before formed in their minds such high ideas from the description given of it, in the word of God: insomuch that it almost startles their faith when they reflect how it could be possible for a land like this, to supply food for so prodigious a number of inhabitants, as are said to have been polled in the twelve tribes at one time; the sum given in by Joab 2 Sam. xxiv. amounting to no less than thirteen hundred thousand fighting men, besides women and children. But it is certain that any man, who is not a little biassed to infidelity before, may see, as he passes along, arguments enough to support his

his faith against such scruples. For it is obvious for any one to observe, that these rocks and hills must have been anciently covered with earth, and cultivated, and made to contribute to the maintenance of the inhabitants, no less than if the country had been all plain: nay perhaps as much more; forasmuch as such a mountainous and uneven surface affords a larger space of ground for cultivation, than this country would amount to, if it were all reduced to a perfect level. For the husbanding of these mountains their manner was to gather up the stones, and place them in several lines, along the sides of the hills, in form of a wall. By such borders they supported the mold from tumbling or being washed down; and formed many beds of excellent soil, rising gradually one above another, from the bottom to the top of the mountains. Of this form of culture you see evident footsteps, wherever you go on all the mountains in Palestine. Thus the very rocks were made fruitful. And perhaps there is no spot of ground in this whole land, that was not formerly improved, to the production of something or other, ministering to the sustenance of human life. For than the plain countries nothing can be more fruitful, whether for the production of corn or cattle, and consequently of milk. The hills, though improper for all cattle except goats, yet being disposed into such beds as are before described, served very well to bear corn, melons, gourds, cucumbers, and such like garden stuff, which makes the principal food of these countries for several months in the year. The most rocky parts of all, which could not well be adjusted in that manner for the production of corn, might yet serve for the plantation of vines and olive-trees; which delight to extract, the one its fatness, the other its sprightly juice, chiefly out of such dry and flinty places. And the great plain joining to the dead sea, which by reason of its saltiness might be thought unserviceable both for cattle, corn, olives and vines, had yet its proper usefulness for the nourishment of bees, and for the fabric of honey; of which Josephus gives us his testimony, De Bell. Jud. Lib. 5, Cap. 4. And I have reason to believe it, because when I was there, I perceived in many places a smell of honey and wax, as strong as if one had been in an apiary. Why then might not this country very well maintain the vast number of its inhabitants, being in every part so productive of either milk, corn, wine, oil, or honey, which are the principal food of these eastern nations? the constitution of their bodies, and the nature of their climate, inclining them to a more abstemious diet than we use in England, and other colder regions."

In the description which Dr. Shaw gives he asserts, that "were the Holy Land as well peopled and cultivated, as in former times, it would be still more fruitful than the very best part of the coast of Syria and Phœnice; for the soil itself (says he) is generally much richer, and all things considered, yields a

more preferable crop. Thus the cotton that is gathered in the plains of Ramah, Esdraelon and Zebulon, is in greater esteem, than what is cultivated near Sidon and Tripoly; neither is it possible for pulse, wheat or any sort of grain, to be more excellent than what is commonly sold in Jerusalem. The barrenness or scarcity rather, which some authors may either ignorantly or maliciously complain of, does not proceed from the incapacity or natural unfruitfulness of the country, but from the want of inhabitants, and the great aversion there is to labour and industry in those few who possess it.

There are besides such perpetual discords and depredations among the governors, who share this fine country, that allowing it was better peopled, yet there would be small encouragement to sow, when it was uncertain who should gather in the harvest. Otherwise the land is a good land, and still capable of affording its neighbours the like supplies of corn and oil, which it is known to have done in the time of Solomon. The parts particularly about Jerusalem, being described to be rocky and mountainous, have been therefore supposed to be barren and unfruitful. Yet granting this conclusion, which is far from being just, a kingdom is not to be denominated barren or unfruitful from one part of it only, but from the whole. Nay farther, the blessing that was given to Judah, was not of the same kind with the blessing of Asher or of Issachar, that *his bread should be fat, or his land should be pleasant*, but that *his eyes should be red with wine, and his teeth should be white with milk* Gen. xlv. 12. Moses also maketh milk and honey (the chief dainties, and subsistence of the earlier ages, as they continue to be of the Bedoween Arabs) to be *the glory of all lands*: all which productions are either actually enjoyed, or at least might be by proper care and application. The plenty of wine alone is wanting at present; yet from the goodness of that little, which is still made at Jerusalem and Hebron, we find that these barren rocks (as they are called) might yield a much greater quantity, if the abstemious Turk and Arab would permit a further increase and improvement to be made of the vine, &c."

The prophets Jeremiah, Isaiah, and others, not only foretold the desolation of the country of the Jews, and their dispersion through all parts of the world, but likewise their infidelity in disbelieving the Messiah, and what would be the consequences that would result therefrom. Of this there are numerous instances; but it will be sufficient to produce one or two passages from the prophet Isaiah. *Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* Isaiah liii. 1. These words both St. John and St. Paul have expressly applied to the unbelieving Jews of their time. The prophet likewise assigns the reason why they would not receive the Messiah, namely, because of his low and afflicted condition; and it is certain that they rejected him on this account, having all along expected him to come as a temporal prince and deliverer in great power and glory.

Isaiah had been commissioned to declare unto the people the judgments of God for their infidelity and disobedience. And he said, *Go ye and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the hearts of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.* Isaiah vi. 9, &c.

In the stile of scripture the prophets are said to do what they declare will be done: and in like manner Jeremiah is said to be set over the nations, and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build and to plant: (Jer. i. 10.) because he was authorised to make known the purposes and decrees of God, and because these events would follow in consequence of his prophecies. *Make the heart of this people fat, is therefore as much as to say, Denounce my judgments upon this people, that their heart shall be fat, and their ears heavy, and their eyes shut; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.* This prophecy might relate in some measure to the state of the Jews before the Babylonish captivity; but it did not receive its full completion till the days of our Saviour: and in this sense it is understood and applied by the writers of the New Testament, and by our Saviour himself.

The prophet is then informed, that this infidelity and obstinacy of his countrymen should be of long duration. *Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate; And the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land.* What a remarkable gradation is here in the denouncing of these judgments! Not only Jerusalem and the cities should be wasted without inhabitants, but even the single houses should be without men, and not only the houses of the cities should be without man, but even the country should be utterly desolate; and not only the people should be removed out of the land, but the Lord should remove them far away; and they should not be removed for a short period, but there should be a great or rather a long forsaking in the midst of the land.

And hath not the world seen all these particulars exactly fulfilled? Have not the Jews laboured under a spiritual blindness and infatuation in hearing but not understanding, in seeing but not perceiving, the Messiah, after the accomplishment of so many prophecies, after the performance of so many miracles? And in consequence of their refusing to convert and be healed, have not their cities been wasted without inhabitant, and their houses without man? Hath not their land been utterly desolate? Have they not been removed far away into the most distant parts of the earth? And hath not their removal or banishment been now upwards of 1700 years duration? Do they not still continue deaf and blind, obstinate and unbelieving?

At the time of the delivery of this prophecy the Jews gloried in being the peculiar people of God, and would any Jew of himself have either

thought, or said, that his nation would, in process of time, become an infidel and reprobate nation, infidel and reprobate for many ages, oppressed by man, and forsaken by God? It was more than 750 years before Christ, that Isaiah predicted these things; and how could he have so done, unless he had been illuminated by the Divine vision: or how could they have succeeded accordingly, unless the spirit of prophecy had been the Spirit of God?

Of the like nature are the prophecies concerning the calling and obedience of the Gentiles. How could such an event be foreseen hundreds of years before it happened? But the prophets are full of the glorious subject, and speak with delight and rapture of the universal kingdom of the Messiah: that God would give unto him the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession, Psal. ii. 8. That all the ends of the world should remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations should worship before him, Psal. xxii. 27. That in the last days the mountain of the House of the Lord should be established in the top of the mountains, and should be exalted above the hills, and all people should flow unto it, Micah iv. 1. (which passage is also to be found in Isaiah, ii. 2.) That from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts, Malachi i. 11.

But the prophet Isaiah is more copious upon this as well as other evangelical subjects: and his 49th and 60th chapters treat particularly of the glory of the church in the abundant access of the Gentiles. *It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth,* Isaiah xlix. 6. And again, *Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee, &c.* Isaiah lx. 1. 3. 5, &c.

The Jews have applied these prophecies to the profelytes whom they have gained in the different nations unto which they have been dispersed: but this is no less absurd than vain. The number of their profelytes was very inconsiderable, and nothing to answer these pompous descriptions. Neither was their religion ever designed by its founder for an universal religion, their worship and sacrifices being confined to one certain place, whither all the males were obliged to repair thrice every year; so that it was plainly calculated for a particular people, and could never become the religion of the whole world. There was indeed to be a religion, which was to be designed for all nations, to be preached in all, and to be received in all: but what prospect or probability was there that such a generous institution should proceed from such a narrow-minded people as the Jews, or that the Gentiles should ever receive a religion from the very people whom they most hated and despised? Was it not much

more likely that the Jews would be corrupted by the idolatrous nations around them, and be induced to comply with the maxims of their powerful neighbours, than that they should be the happy instruments of reforming the world, and converting some of all nations to the worship of the true God?

It is farther intimated by the prophet, that this revolution (the greatest that ever happened in the religious world) should be effected by a few people of low rank and education. *A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation*, Isaiah lx. 22.

The commission given by Our Blessed Saviour to his apostles was, *Go, teach all nations*. And who were the persons to whom this commission was given? Was it to those who might have been thought best qualified to carry it into execution, such as the rich, the wise, the mighty of this world? No: they were chiefly a few poor fishermen, of low parentage and education, of no learning or eloquence, of no policy or address, of no worldly repute or authority, despised as Jews by the rest of mankind, and as the meanest and worst of Jews by the Jews themselves. These were the persons (strange and wonderful as it may appear) who were to contend with the prejudices of all the world, the superstitions of the people, the interests of the priests, the vanity of philosophers, the pride of rulers, the malice of Jews, the learning of Greece, and the power of the Roman empire.

This great revolution was not only to be brought about by a few persons of mean birth, but it was likewise to be effected in a very short space of time. *I the Lord will hasten it in his time*, Isaiah lx. 22.

After the ascension of Our Saviour the number of the disciples together was about *an hundred and twenty*, Acts i. 15. but they soon increased and multiplied. The first sermon preached by St. Peter added unto them *about three thousand souls*, Acts ii. 41. and the second made up the number *about five thousand*, Acts iv. 4.

In the space of forty years, previous to the final destruction of Jerusalem, the gospel had been so spread, that it was preached in almost every region of the then known world. In the reign of Constantine the Great, Christianity became the religion of the empire; and after having suffered a little under Julian it entirely prevailed and triumphed over paganism and idolatry, and still does prevail in the most civilized and improved parts of the earth. All this was more than man could foresee, and much more than man could execute: and we experience the good effects of these prophecies to this day.

The speedy propagation of the gospel could not have been effected by persons so unequal to the task, if the same Divine Spirit who foretold it had not likewise assisted them in it, according to the promise, *I the Lord will hasten it in his time*. In short, we may be as certain as if we had beheld it with our own eyes, that the matter really was as represented by the Evangelist, *They went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following*, Mark xvi. 20.

But neither the prophecies concerning the Gentiles, nor those concerning the Jews, have

yet received their full and entire completion. Our Saviour hath not yet had *the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession*: Psal. ii. 8. *All the ends of the earth have not yet turned unto the Lord*: xxii. 27. *All people, nations, and languages, have not yet served him*: Dan. vii. 14. These things have hitherto been only partially, but they will, in time, be even literally fulfilled. Neither are the Jews yet made *an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations*, Is. lx. 15. The time is not yet come, when *violence shall no more be heard in the land, wasting nor destruction within their borders*. ver. 18. God's promises to them are not yet fulfilled to the extent. *Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them in every side, and bring them into their own land. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, even they and their children, and their childrens children for ever, and my servant David shall be their prince for ever*. Ezek. xxxvii. 21, 25. *Then shall they know that I am the Lord their God, who caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen; but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there. Neither will I hide my face any more from them, for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God*, Ezek. xxxix. 28, 29.

However, what hath already been accomplished is a sufficient pledge and earnest of what is yet to come: and we have all imaginable reason to believe, since so many of these prophecies have been fulfilled, that the remaining ones will be fulfilled also: that there will be yet a greater harvest of the nations, and the yet unconverted parts of the earth will be enlightened with the knowledge of the Lord; and that the Jews will, in God's good time, be converted to Christianity, and, upon their conversion, be again restored to their native country.

The prophecy of Hosea we have already seen fulfilled in part, and there is not the least reason to believe but that the whole will be amply fulfilled in a proper course of time. *The children of Israel, says he, shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image (or altar) and without an ephod (or priest to wear an ephod) or without teraphim (or Divine manifestations.) Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days*, Hosea iii. 4, 5.

Thus have we taken a summary view of those prophecies contained in the Old Testament which more immediately relate to the present state and condition of the Jews: and what stronger or more convincing arguments can be given of the truth both of the Jewish and the Christian religion?

The Jews were once the peculiar people of God: and (as St. Paul saith) *Hath God cast away his people? God forbid*, Rom. xi. 1. We see that after so many ages they are still preserved, by a miracle of Providence, a distinct people; and why is such a continual miracle exerted but for the greater illustration of the divine truth, and the better accomplishment of the Divine promises, as well those which are yet to be, as those which are already fulfilled.

The great empires and powers which have heretofore in their turns, subdued and oppressed the people of God are all come to ruin; because, though they executed the Divine purposes in oppressing the Jews, yet that was more than they knew, and their intentions in acting as they did were only to gratify their own pride and ambition, their own cruelty and revenge. And since such hath been the fatal end of the enemies and oppressors of the Jews, in former times, it should serve as a warning to all those who may, at any time, or upon any occasion hereafter, be inclined to raise a clamour and persecution against them.

That the Jews are blameable for still persisting in their infidelity, after so many means have been taken to bring them to a sense of conviction, there is not the least doubt: but this does not authorize us to proscribe, abuse, injure and oppress them, as Christians of more zeal than either knowledge or charity have, in all ages, been inclined to do. *Charity is greater than faith*; and it is worse in us to be cruel and uncharitable, than it is in them to be obstinate and unbelieving. Persecution is the spirit of popery, and in the worst of popish countries the Jews are the most cruelly used: but the spirit of protestantism is toleration and indulgence to weaker consciences.

It may be observed by some that shewing compassion to these unhappy people would be a means of defeating the fulfilment of the prophecies. But this is far from being the case: they were to be harrassed and oppressed only by wicked nations; the good were to shew mercy on them; and we should chuse rather to be the dispensers of God's mercies than the executioners of his judgments.

If we read the eleventh chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans we shall there see what that great apostle of the Gentiles (who certainly understood the prophecies better than any of us can pretend to do) saith of the infidelity of the Jews. Some of the Gentiles of his time valued themselves upon their superior advantages, and he reproves them for it, that they who *were cut out of the olive-tree, which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a good olive-tree*, should presume to *boast against the natural branches*, Rom. xi. 18 24. But what would he have said, if they had made religion an instrument of faction, and had been for stirring up a persecution against them?

Christians of all denominations should consider and reflect, that it is to the Jews we owe the oracles of God, the scriptures of the New

Testament as well as the Old. We should consider, that *the glorious company of the apostles, as well as the goodly fellowship of the prophets, were all Jews*. We should consider, that *of them as concerning the flesh Christ came*, the Saviour of the world: and surely something of kindness and gratitude is due for such infinite obligations.

Though the Jews are now broken off, yet they are not utterly cast away. *Because of unbelief, as St. Paul argueth, they were broken off, and thou standest by faith; be not high-minded, but fear*, Rom. xi. 20. There will be a time when they will be grafted in again, and again become the people of God; for as the apostle proceeds, *I would not bretheren that ye should be ignorant of this my story lest ye should be wise in your own conceits that blindness in part is happened to Israel, unto the fulness of the Gentiles become in, and so all Israel shall be saved*, Rom. xi. 25, 26.

And which now, it may be asked, is the most likely method to contribute to the conversion of these unhappy people: which are the most natural means of reconciling them to us and our religion: Is it to be effected by prayer, argument, long-suffering, gentleness and goodness; or by noise, invective, injury and outrage, the malice of some, and the folly and madness of more? They certainly cannot be worse now than when they crucified the Son of God, and persecuted his apostles. But what saith Our Blessed Saviour himself? *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do*, Luke xxiii. 34. and what saith his apostle St. Paul? *Bretheren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved*, Rom. x. 1.

In conformity to these blessed examples our church hath also taught us to pray for them: and how can prayer and persecution consist and agree together? Those who encourage persecution of any kind are only pretended friends to the church, but real enemies to religion. All true members of the church, all true protestants, all true christians will, as the apostle adviseth, *put away all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, with all malice*, Ephes. iv. 31. And they will all join heart and voice in that excellent collect—*Have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics, and take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of thy word: and so fetch them home, blessed Lord, to thy flock, that they may be saved among the remnant of the true Israelites, and be made one fold under one shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord*.

C H A P. VIII.

Of the Prophecies concerning the antient city of NINEVEH, once the metropolis of the Assyrian empire.

THE first great prophecies contained in the Old Testament are those which more immediately relate to the Jews themselves who were once the peculiar people of God; and the principal subjects of those prophecies are the various changes and revolutions that were to happen in the Jewish church and state. But the spirit of prophecy is not confined to the Jews alone: there are other subjects occasionally introduced; and, for the greater manifestation of Divine Providence, the fate of other nations is also foretold, and more especially those which lay in the neighbourhood of Judea, and had intercourse and connection with the Jews.

It is much to be lamented, that of these eastern nations, and of these early times, we have no regular histories, but only a few fragments which have escaped the general shipwreck of time. From these, however, we see enough to make us admire these wonders of Providence; and from these are clearly shown that the condition of cities and kingdoms hath been such as was long ago foretold by the prophets.

The first prophecies we shall notice on this subject are those relative to the antient city of Nineveh, once the metropolis of the Assyrian empire, and whose inhabitants not only destroyed the kingdom of Israel, but likewise greatly oppressed the kingdom of Judah.

The prophet Isaiah, in denouncing the judgments of God against the Assyrians, says, *O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation*, Isaiah x. 3. It was the will of Providence that those people should be employed as the ministers of his wrath, and executioners of his vengeance, against the perverse and obstinate Jews. *I will send him against an hypocritical nation; and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire in the streets*, Isaiah x. 6. But it was far from any intent of the Assyrians to execute the Divine will, or to chastise the vices of mankind; they only meant to extend their conquests, and establish their own dominion upon the ruins of others: *Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so, but it is in his heart to destroy, and cut off nations not a few*, ver. 7. Wherefore when they shall have served the purposes of Divine Providence, they shall be severely punished for their pride and ambition, their tyranny and cruelty to their neighbours: *Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion, and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the*

king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks, ver. 12.

There was no prospect of such an event as this, while the Assyrians were in the midst of their successes and triumphs: but still the word of the prophet prevailed: and it was not long after the calamities they brought upon the Jews, when the Assyrian empire (properly so called) was overthrown, and Nineveh destroyed.

The city of Nineveh was one of the largest and most antient cities in the world. According to the best chronologers it was built not long after the Flood, and very soon after the tower of Babel, by Nimrod; but being afterwards greatly enlarged by Ninus, from him it received its name. It was situated on the banks of the Tigris, and (according to the description given of it by Diodorus Siculus) was, in length, an hundred and fifty stadia; in breadth fourscore and ten; and in circumference, four hundred and seventy; which, being reduced to our measure, make it about twenty-one miles long, nine broad, and fifty-four round. How great the number of its inhabitants was, we may learn from *the six score thousand children who could not discern between their right hands and their left*, Jonah iv. 11. And, according to a proportionate computation there must have been in the whole not less than six hundred thousand persons.

The inhabitants of Nineveh, like those of other great cities, abounding in wealth and luxury, became very corrupt in their morals. In consequence of this God was pleased to commission the prophet Jonah to preach unto them the necessity of repentance, as the only means of averting their impending destruction: and such was the success of his preaching, that both the king and people repented and turned from their evil ways, and thereby, for a time, escaped the execution of the Divine judgments.

But this repentance of the Ninevites, we may reasonably presume, was of no long continuance; for not many years after we find the prophet Nahum foretelling the total and entire destruction of the city. Indeed, the whole of his prophecy relates to this single event; and the city was accordingly destroyed by the Medes and Babylonians, who, uniting together, subverted the whole Assyrian empire.

It is remarkable that the prophet Nahum not only foretold the destruction of Nineveh, but likewise the manner in which it was to be effected. He foretold that the Assyrians should be taken while they were drunken. *For while they be folded together as thorns, and while they are drunken*

as drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble full dry, Nahum i. 10. And Diodorus Siculus says, "it was while all the Assyrian army were feasting for their former victories that those about Arbaces (the general of the Median forces) being informed by some deserters of the negligence and drunkenness in the camp of the enemy, assaulted them unexpected by night, and falling on them while they were in the utmost disorder, and unprepared, became masters of the camp, slew many of the soldiers, and drove the rest into the city."

The prophet Nahum foretels, that the gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved, Nahum ii. 6. And Diodorus tells us, "there was an old prophecy, that Nineveh should not be taken till the river became an enemy to the city; and in the third year of the siege, the river being swollen with continual rains overflowed part of the city, and broke down the wall for twenty furlongs: that the king, thinking the oracle was fulfilled, and the river become an enemy to the city, built a large funeral pile in the palace, and collecting together all his wealth, and his concubines and eunuchs, burnt himself and them in the palace; and the enemy entered the breach that the waters had made, and took the city."

Thus we find that what the prophet had predicted was literally fulfilled, *With an overflowing flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof*, Nahum i. 8. He likewise promises the enemy much spoil of gold and silver, *Take ye the spoil of silver, take the spoil of gold; for there is no end of the store, and glory out of all the pleasant furniture*, Nahum ii. 9. And we read in Diodorus Siculus, that Arbaces carried many talents of gold and silver to Ecbatane, the royal city belonging to the Medes.

According to the prophecy of Nahum the city was to be destroyed partly by water and partly by fire, *Behold, the gates of thy land shall be set wide open unto thine enemies: the fire shall devour thy bars*, Nahum iii. 13. And we find by Diodorus that this literally took place, for after the Medes and Babylonians had possessed themselves of the city, they set fire to it, and reduced the greater part to ashes.

The prophet Nahum was the principal person who foretold the total and entire destruction of the antient city of Nineveh. *The Lord (saith he) with an over-running flood will make an utter end of the place thereof; he will make an utter end; affliction shall not rise up the second time*, chap. i. 8. 9. Again, *Where is the dwelling of the lions?* (meaning Nineveh, whose princes ravaged like lions:) *behold, I am against thee, saith the lord of hosts, and I will cut off thy prey from the earth and the voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard*, chap. ii. 11. 13. And again, *Thy crowned are as the locusts, and thy captains as the great grasshoppers, which camp in the hedges in the cold day; but when the sun ariseth, they flee away, and their place is not known. Thy shep-*

berds slumber, O king of Assyria; thy nobles shall dwell in the dust; thy people is scattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth them: there is no healing of thy bruise; thy wound is grievous: all that hear the bruit of thee shall clap the hands over thee; for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually? chap. iii. 17, 18, 19.

The prophet Zedekiah likewise, in the days of Josiah king of Judah, foretold the same melancholy event. *The Lord will stretch out his hand against the north, and destroy Assyria, and will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness: and flocks shall lie down in the midst of her, all the beasts of the nations; both the cormorant and the bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels of it; their voice shall sing in the windows; desolation shall be in the thresholds; for he shall uncover the cedar work: this is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me; how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! every one that passeth by her shall hiss and wag his hand*. Zeph. ii. 13, &c.

It is not to be wondered at that when those prophecies were at first delivered, the people should think it very unlikely they would ever be fulfilled. What probability, indeed, was there to think that so great a city, and which contained so many thousand inhabitants, should ever be totally destroyed? And yet, so totally was it destroyed, that even the place where it stood is now scarcely known.

It has been already observed that Nineveh was taken and destroyed by the Medes and Babylonians; and what we may reasonably suppose contributed to complete its ruin and devastation was, Nebuchadnezzar's soon afterwards enlarging and beautifying of Babylon. From that time no mention is made of Nineveh by any of the sacred writers; and the most antient of the profane authors, who have occasion to say any thing about it, speak of it as a city that once was great and flourishing, but now destroyed and desolate.

The same accounts are given of it by all our modern travellers, and particularly by Thevenot, on whose authority Dean Prideaux relates, that, "Mosul is situated on the west side of the river Tigris, where was antiently only a suburb of the Old Nineveh, for the city itself stood on the east side of the river, where are to be seen some of its rubbish of great extent even to this day."

Another modern traveller says, "In this country the famous city of Nineveh once stood, on the eastern bank of the river Tigris, opposite to the place where Mosul now stands. There is nothing now to be seen but heaps of rubbish, almost a league along the river Tigris, opposite to Mosul, which people imagine to be the remains of this vast city."

Such hath been the fate of the once great city of Nineveh; in the destruction of which is most amply manifested the great truths of the Divine predictions!

C H A P. IX.

The Prophecies concerning the City of BABYLON.

AFTER the destruction of Nineveh, the city of Babylon became not only the greatest and most magnificent metropolis in the east, but in the whole world. It is said by some to have been first built by Semiramis, queen of Assyria, while others assert that it was built by Balus the successor of Nimrod. But whoever was the first founder, we may reasonably suppose that it received very great improvements afterwards, and Nebuchadnezzar, in particular, enlarged and beautified it to such a degree, that he may in a manner (as himself boasts) be said to have built it. *Is not this (says he) great Babylon that I have built for the house of the king, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?* Dan. iv. 30. By one means or other Babylon became so great and famous a city as to give name to a very large empire. It is called in Scripture, *great Babylon, the glory of kingdoms; the beauty of the Chaldees excellency; the praise of the whole earth, &c.* And its beauty, strength and grandeur, its walls, temples and palaces, are described with such pomp and magnificence by profane authors, that it must deservedly have been reputed one of the wonders of the world.

It might naturally have been imagined that such a city as this was in no danger of ever being abandoned, and much more of its coming to destruction. Such a city as this might surely, with less vanity than any other, boast that she should continue for ever, which, indeed, was the case. *I shall be a lady for ever; I am, and mine age shall not fail me: I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children,* Isaiah xlvii. 7, 8. But this was a presumptive construction, for great as it then was the time did come when all its splendor was laid aside, and the whole became one continued scene of ruins.

The inhabitants of Babylon were no less enemies to the Jews than those of Nineveh. The one subverted the kingdom of Israel, and the other the kingdom of Judah: It is therefore not to be wondered at that there should be several prophecies relative to these two cities, and that the fate of Babylon should be foretold as well as that of Nineveh. *Israel is a scattered sheep, the lions have driven him away; first the king of Assyria hath devoured him, and last this Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones: Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts the God of Israel, Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I have punished the king of Assyria.* Lament. i. 17, 18.

The prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah very plainly, and in a particular manner, foretold the destruction of this great city. They both lived during the declension of the kingdom of Judah. As they predicted the captivity of the Jews, so they likewise foretold the downfall of their enemies: and they speak with such assurance of the event, that they describe a thing future as if it were already past. *Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods be both broken into the ground,* Isaiah xxi. 9. *Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed; howl for her, take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed,* Jeremiah li. 8.

Cyrus, who was the conqueror of Babylon, and transferred the empire from the Babylonians to the Medes and Persians, was particularly foretold by name many years before he was born, Isaiah xlv. 28. xlv. 1. He is honoured with the appellation of the *Lord's anointed*, and the Lord is said to *have holden his right hand*, and to have *girded him*. He was certainly a person of very extraordinary abilities, and was raised up to be the instrument of Providence in executing great and wise purposes.

It was foretold that Cyrus should be a great conqueror, that he should *subdue nations before him: and I will loose the loins of kings to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates shall not be shut,* Isaiah xlv. 1. This was strictly fulfilled, for Cyrus subdued several kings, and took several cities, particularly Sardes and Babylon, and extended his conquests over all Asia, from the river Indus to the Ægean Sea.

It was likewise foretold that Cyrus should find great spoil and treasure among the nations he should conquer. *I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places,* Isaiah xlv. 3. And the riches which Cyrus found in his conquests were of prodigious value, as appears from the accounts given us by Pliny. Nor can we wonder at it, when we consider that those parts of Asia, at that time, abounded in wealth and luxury. Babylon had been heaping up treasures for many years; and the riches of Croesus king of Lydia, whom Cyrus conquered and took prisoner, are, in a manner, become proverbial.

The prophet Jeremiah not only foretels the destruction of the great city of Babylon, but likewise points out the time when it is to be effected. *These nations (says he, speaking of the Jews) shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years: and it shall come to pass when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord,* Jer. xxv. 11, 12. This prophecy was delivered, as appears from the

the first verse of the chapter, in the fourth year of *Jehoiaim the son of Josiah king of Judah*, that was the first year of *Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon*; from which time there were seventy years to the taking of Babylon, and the restoration of the Jews from captivity. Nebuchadnezzar, after taking Jerusalem, transplanted the Jews to Babylon in order to strengthen the place: their removal from thence must, therefore, have greatly weakened it; after which it became more and more distressed, till at length it was finally destroyed.

It was foretold that various nations should unite against Babylon. *The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together; the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle*, Isaiah xlii. 4. And particularly it was foretold, that the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz (that is, the Armenians, Phrygians and other nations) should compose part of his army. *Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni and Ashchenaz*, Jer. li. 27. And accordingly Cyrus's army consisted of various nations; and among them were those very people whom he had conquered before, and now obliged to attend him in this expedition*.

It was foretold that the Babylonians should be terrified, and hide themselves within their walls. *The mighty men of Babylon have foretold to fight, they have remained in their holds, their might hath failed, they become as women*, Jer. li. 30. And accordingly we find that, after a battle or two, the Babylonians never recovered their courage to face the enemy in the field again: they retired within their walls, and the first time that Cyrus came with his army before the place, he could not provoke them to venture forth and try the fortune of arms, even though he sent a challenge to the king to fight with him in single combat: and the last time that he went, he consulted with his officers about the best method of carrying on the siege, "since, saith he, they do not come forth and fight."

It was likewise foretold that the river should be dried up before the city should be taken. This appeared very extraordinary indeed, the river being more than two furlongs broad, and deeper than the height of two men standing one upon another; so that the city was thought to be stronger and better fortified by the river than by the walls. But notwithstanding this the prophets predicted that the waters should be dried up, (see Isaiah xlv. 27. Jer. i. 38. li. 36.) And accordingly Cyrus turned the course of the river Euphrates which ran through the midst of Babylon, and, by means of deep trenches and the canals, so drained the waters that the river became easily fordable for his sol-

diers to enter the city; and by those means Babylon (which was otherwise impregnable) was taken.

It was foretold that the city should be taken by surprize during the time of a feast. *I have laid a snare for thee, and thou art also taken, O Babylon, and thou wast not aware, thou art found and also caught*, Jer. i. 24. *In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake saith the Lord*, Jer. li. 57. And accordingly the city was taken in the night of a great annual feast, while the inhabitants were dancing, drinking, and revelling, and not having the least suspicion that any immediate danger was at hand.

Such were the very extraordinary circumstances that attended the reduction of Babylon; and how could any man foresee or foretell such singular events, such remarkable circumstances, without revelation and inspiration from God!

If we examine still farther into these mysterious affairs, we shall see how these and other prophecies have, by degrees, been fulfilled, for in the very nature of the thing, they could not be fulfilled all at once. As the prophets often speak of things to be in future as if they were already effected, so they speak often of things to be brought about in process of time as if they were to succeed immediately. The past, present, and to come, are all alike known to infinite wisdom; but it is probable that the intermediate time was not revealed to the minds of the prophets.

The prophet Isaiah addresseth Babylon by the name of a virgin, as having never before been taken by an enemy. *Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground*, Isaiah xlvii. 1. And Herodotus saith expressly, that this was the first time Babylon was taken. After this it never more recovered its ancient splendor: from an imperial, it became a tributary city; from being governed by its own kings, and governing strangers, it came itself to be governed by strangers; and the seat of empire being transplanted to Shushan, it decayed by degrees, till it was at length reduced to utter desolation.

We are told by Berofus, that when Cyrus had taken Babylon, he ordered the outer walls to be pulled down, because the city appeared to him very difficult to be taken on that account. And Xenophon informs us, that Cyrus obliged the Babylonians to deliver up all their arms upon pain of death, distributed their best houses among his officers, imposed a tribute upon them, appointed a strong garrison, and compelled the Babylonians to defray the charge, being desirous to keep them poor as the best means of keeping them obedient.

But notwithstanding these precautions, they rebelled against Darius, and, in order to hold out to the last extremity, they took all their women, and

* Among those who voluntarily assisted Cyrus in this undertaking were the people of Elam, who, though subject to Babylon, rose up against it; and the reason of their so doing is thus accounted for by Xenophon. Abradates was viceroy or governor of Susa, or Shushan, and Shushan was the capital of the province of Elam, Dan. viii. 2. His wife

Panthea, a lady of the most exquisite beauty, happened to be taken prisoner by the Persians. Cyrus treated her with such generosity, and preserved her with such strict honour safe and inviolate for her husband, as won the heart of the prince, so that he and his people revolted to Cyrus, and fought against the Babylonians.

and each man choosing one of them out of his own family, whom he liked best, they strangled the rest, that unnecessary mouths might not consume their provisions. "And hereby (saith Dean Prideaux) was very signally fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah against them, in which he foretold, *That two things should come to them in a moment, in one day, the loss of children and widowhood, and that these shall come upon them in their persecution, for the multitude of their sorceries, and the great abundance of their enchantments*, Isaiah xlvii. 9. And in what greater perfection could these calamities come upon them, than when they themselves thus upon themselves became the executioners of them?" They sustained the siege and all the efforts of Darius for twenty months, and at length the city was taken by stratagem. As soon as Darius had made himself master of the place he ordered three thousand of the principal men to be crucified, and thereby fulfilled the prophecies of the cruelty which the Medes and Persians should use towards the Babylonians, Isaiah xiii. 17, 18. Jer. l. 42. He likewise demolished the wall and burnt the gates, by which was remarkably fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah, *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burnt with fire*, Jer. li. 58.

When Xerxes returned from his unfortunate expedition into Greece, partly out of religious zeal (being a professed enemy to image worship) and partly to reimburse himself after his immense expences, he seized upon the treasures, and plundered or destroyed the temples and idols in Babylon, thereby accomplishing the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah: *Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground: Bel loweth down, Nebo stoopeth*, Isaiah xxi. 9. lxvi. 1. *Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces, her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces. And I will punish Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that whi he hath swallowed up*, Jer. l. 2. li. 44, &c. This part of the prophecy was most literally fulfilled, when the vessels of the House of God which Nebuchadnezzar had brought from Jerusalem, and placed in the temple of Bel, were restored by order of Cyrus, and carried back to Jerusalem.

After the destruction of Babylon by the Persians, Alexander intended to have made it the seat of his empire, and actually set men at work to rebuild the temple of Balus, to repair the banks of the river, and to bring back the waters into their own channel. But if these designs had taken effect, how could the prophecies have been fulfilled? And what providence therefore was it, that his designs did not take effect, and that the breaches were never repaired? He met with some difficulties in the work, and death soon after put an end to this and all his other projects; and none of his successors ever attempted it. Seleucia being built a few years after in the neighbourhood, Babylon, in a little time, became *wholly desolate*, Seleucia not only robbing it of its inhabitants, but (according to Pliny) even of its name.

That the prophecies relative to the fate of this antient and once magnificent city have, in the most strict manner, been fulfilled, appears from

accounts given of it by a variety of authors both antient and modern. Among the former, Diodorus Siculus describes the buildings as ruined or decayed in his time, and says that only a small part of the city was then inhabited, the greatest part within the walls being tilled. Strabo (who wrote not long after Diodorus) says, that one part of the city was demolished by the Persians, and the other by time and the neglect of the Macedonians, and especially after Seleucus Nicator had built Seleucia on the Tigris in the neighbourhood of Babylon, and he and his successors removed their court thither: and now (saith he) Seleucia is greater than Babylon, and Babylon is much deserted, so that one may apply to this what the poet said of Magalopolis in Arcadia, *the great city is now become a great desert*. Pliny, in like manner, affirms, that it was reduced to solitude, being exhausted by the neighbourhood of Seleucia, built for that purpose by Seleucus Nicator. Maximus Tyrius mentions it as lying neglected and forsaken; and Lucian intimates, that in a little time it would be sought for, and not found. In the time of Jerome (who lived in the fourth century after Christ) it was converted into a chace to keep wild beasts within the compass of its walls for the hunting of the later kings of Persia. "We have learned (saith he) from a certain Elamite brother, who coming out of those parts now liveth as a monk at Jerusalem, that the royal huntings are in Babylon, and wild beasts of every kind are confined within the circuit of the walls." And a little after he saith, "that excepting the brick walls, which, after many years, have been repaired for the inclosing of wild beasts, all the space within is entire desolation."

If later authors the first who mentions any thing concerning Babylon is Benjamin of Tudela, a Jew who lived in the twelfth century. In his Itinerary he says "antient Babylon is now laid waste, but some ruins are still to be seen of Nebuchadnezzar's palace, and men fear to enter them on account of the serpents and scorpions which are in the midst of it." And Taxeira, a Portuguese, in the description of his travels from India to Italy, says, "of this great famous city there is nothing but only a few vestiges remaining, nor in the whole region is any place less frequented."

Such are the accounts given us of the state of Babylon by antient authors; and let us see what relation is given of it by the writers and travellers of modern date. The first we shall quote of these is one Rauwolf, a German traveller, who passed that way in the year 1571, and whose account of these ruins of this once famous city is as follows: "The village (says he) of Elugo now lieth on the place where formerly old Babylon, the metropolis of Chaldaea, was situated. The harbour is a quarter of a league's distance from it, where people go ashore in order to proceed by land to the celebrated city of Bagdat, which is a day and a half's journey from thence eastward on the Tigris. This country is so dry and barren, that it cannot be tilled, and so bare that I could never have believed that this powerful city, once the most stately
" and

“ and renowned in all the world, and situated in the pleasant and fruitful country of Shinar, could have ever stood there, if I had not known it by its situation, and many antiquities of great beauty, which are still standing hereabout in great desolation. First by the old bridge which was laid over the Euphrates, whereof there are some pieces and arches still remaining built of burnt brick, and so strong that it is admirable.—Just before the village of Elugo is the hill whereon the castle stood, and the ruins of its fortification are still visible, though demolished and uninhabited. Behind it, and pretty near to it, did stand the tower of Babylon.—It is still to be seen, and is half a league in diameter, but so ruinous, so low, and so full of venomous creatures, which lodge in holes made by them in the rubbish, that no one durst approach nearer to it than within half a league, except during two months in the winter, when these animals never stir out of their holes. There is one fort particularly, which the inhabitants in the language of the country (which is Persian) call Eglo, the poison whereof is very searching: they are larger than our lizard.”

Petrus Vallenfis (a noble Roman) who was at Bagdat in the year 1616, and went to see the ruins (as they are thought to be) of ancient Babylon, informs us that, “ in the middle of a vast and level plain, about a quarter of a league from Euphrates, which in that place runs westward, appears an heap of ruined buildings, like a huge mountain, the materials of which are so confounded together, that one knows not what to make of it.—Its situation and form correspond with that pyramid which Strabo calls the tower of Belus; and is in all likelihood the tower of Nimrod in Babylon, or Babel, as that place is still called.—There appear no marks of ruins, without the compass of that huge mass, to convince one so great a city as Babylon had ever stood there: all one discovers within fifty or sixty paces of it, being only the remains here and there of some foundations of buildings; and the country round about it so flat and level, that one can hardly believe it should be chosen for the situation of so great and noble a city as Babylon, or that there were ever any remarkable buildings on it: but for my part I am astonished there appears so much as there does, considering it is at least four thousand years since that city was built, and that Diodorus Siculus tells us it was reduced almost to nothing in his time.”

Monsr. Tavernier, a very celebrated traveller, tells us that, “ at the parting of the Tigris, which is but a little way from Bagdat, there is the foundation of a city, which may seem to have been a large league in compass. There are some of the walls yet standing, upon which six coaches may go abreast: they are made of burnt brick, ten feet square, and three thick. The chronicles of the country say, here stood the ancient Babylon.” Tavernier, however, did not think the ruins he saw to be those of Nebuchadnezzar’s palace or of the tower of Babel, as some have supposed they were. He

adopts the opinion of the Arabs, and supposes them rather to be the remains of some tower built by one of their princes for a beacon to assemble his subjects in time of war; which, in all probability, was the real state of the case.

The observation made by Mr. Salmon (in his Modern History) relative to Babylon, are certainly very just and pertinent. “ What (says he) is as strange as any thing that is related of Babylon is, that we cannot learn with certainty, either from ancient writers, or modern travellers, where this famous city stood, only in general, that it was situated in the province of Chaldæa, upon the river Euphrates considerably above the place where it is united with the Tigris. Travellers have guessed from the great ruins they have discovered in several parts of this country, that in this or that place Babylon once stood: but when we come to examine nicely the places they mention, we only learn that they are certainly in the wrong, and have taken the ruins of Seleucia, or some other great town, for those of Babylon.”

The last traveller we shall mention that takes notice of the ruins of Babylon is Mr. Hanway, who, previous to his giving an account of the siege of Bagdat by Nadir Shah, prefaceth it in these words: “ Before we enter upon any circumstance relating to the siege of Bagdat, it may afford some light to the subject, to give a short account of this famous city, in the neighbourhood of which formerly stood the metropolis of one of the most ancient and most potent monarchies in the world. The place is generally called Bagdat or Bagdad, tho’ some writers preserve the ancient name of Babylon. The reason of thus confounding these two cities is, that the Tigris and Euphrates, forming one common stream before they disembogue into the Persian gulf, are not unfrequently mentioned as one and the same river. It is certain that the present Bagdat is situated on the Tigris, but the ancient Babylon, according to all historians, both sacred and profane, was on the Euphrates. The ruins of the latter, which geographical writers place about fifteen leagues to the south of Bagdat, are now so much effaced, that there are hardly any vestiges of them to point out the situation. In the time of the emperor Theodosius there was only a great park remaining, in which the kings of Persia bred wild beasts for the amusement of hunting.”

How evidently does it appear, from all these accounts, with what great punctuality time hath fulfilled the predictions of the prophets concerning Babylon! When it was converted into a chase for wild beasts to feed and breed there, then were exactly accomplished the words of the prophets, that *the wild beasts of the desert with the wild beasts of the islands should dwell there, and cry in their desolate houses*. One part of the country was overflowed by the river having been turned out of its course and never restored to its former channel, and thence became boggy and marshy, so that it might literally be said to be *a possession for the litten and pools of water*, Isaiah xiv. 23. Another part is described as dry and naked, and barren of every thing,

thing, so that thereby was also fulfilled another prophecy, *Her cities are a desolation, a dry land and a wilderness, a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby*, Jer. li. 43. The place thereabout is represented as overrun with serpents, scorpions, and all sorts of venomous and unclean creatures, so that *their houses are full of doleful creatures, and dragons cry in their pleasant palaces; and Babylon is become heaps, a dwelling place for dragons, an astonishment and an hissing without an inhabitant*. For all these reasons *neither can the Arabian pitch his tent there, neither can the shepherds make their folds there*. And when we find that modern travellers cannot now certainly discover the spot of ground, whereon this renowned city once was situated, we may very properly say, *How is Babylon become a desolation among the nations? Every purpose of the Lord hath been performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant*: and the expression is no less true than sublime, that the

Lord of hosts hath swept it with the besom of destruction.

Thus have we represented, in the most clear and undeniable light, the amazing prophecies which were foretold and fulfilled concerning the fate of the once magnificent city of Babylon. How wonderful are such predictions compared with the events; and what a convincing argument it is of the truth and divinity of the Holy Scriptures! Well might God represent this as a memorable instance of his prescience, and challenge all the other false gods, and their votaries to produce the like. *Who hath declared this from antient time? have not I the Lord? and there is no God else beside me, a just God and a Saviour, there is none beside me; Declaring the end from the beginning, and from antient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure*, Isaiah xlv. 21. xlv. 10. And indeed, where can we find a similar instance, but in Scripture, from the beginning of the world to the present time?

C H A P. X.

Of the Prophecies concerning the City of TYRE.

THE destruction of Tyre is another memorable instance of the great truth of prophecy. The inhabitants of this city, as well as those of Nineveh and Babylon, were great enemies to the Jews; but it was not altogether on this account that they were punished with the Divine vengeance. It was owing to their pride and self-sufficiency, both of which were founded on their great riches obtained by traffic, and for which they were more famous than any other people at that time on the earth.

The fate of this city was predicted by the prophets many years before it happened, and particularly by Isaiah and Ezekiel. But it hath been a matter of doubt among the learned which of the Tyres was the subject of the prophecies, whether Palætyrus, or Old Tyre, that was seated on the continent, or New Tyre, that was built on an island nearly opposite. But the best answer to be given to this, and the most incontestible observation is, that the prophecies manifestly appertain to both, some expressions being applicable only to the former, and others only to the latter.

In one place Tyre is described as *situate at the entry of the sea*, Ezek. xxvii. 3; in others as *in the midst of the sea*, ver. 4 and 25. Sometimes it is represented as *besieged with horses and with chariots*, Ezek. xxvi. 7, &c. and at other times it is expressly called *an island, and the sea, even the strength of the sea*, Ezek. xxiii. 2. It is said, *By reason of the abundance of his horses their dust shall cover thee, thy walls shall shake at the noise of the horsemen, and of the*

wheels, and of the chariots when he shall enter into thy gates, as men enter into a city wherein is made a breach, Ezek. xxvi. 10. It is afterwards said, *They shall break down thy walls, and destroy the pleasant houses, and they shall lay thy stones, and thy timber, and thy dust in the midst of the water*, Ezek. xxvi. 12. And again, *They shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas*, Ezek. xxviii. 8.

From these expressions, it is evident that the insular Tyre, as well as the Tyre on the continent, is included in these prophecies: they are both comprehended under the same name, and both spoken of as one and the same city, one part being built on the continent, and the other on an adjoining island.

It was usual with the prophets, when they denounced the downfall and desolation of a city or kingdom, to describe, by way of contrast, its then flourishing condition, to show, in a stronger point of view, how Providence changeth the scene, and ordereth and disposeth all events. The prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel observe the same method with regard to Tyre. Isaiah speaketh of it as a place of great antiquity, *Is this your joyous city, whose antiquity is of antient days?* Is. xxiii. 7. And it is mentioned as a strong place so early as in the days of Joshua, *the strong city of Tyre*, Josh. xix. 29. Nay, there are even heathen authors who extol the great antiquity of the place. The Greek geographer Strabo saith, that after Sidon the greatest and most antient city of the Phœnicians

cians was Tyre, which was a rival to Sidon in greatness, and lustre, and antiquity.

Antient, however, as this city was, it was the daughter of Sidon, as it is called by the prophet Isaiah, xxiii. 12. and the merchants of Sidon, who pass over the sea, replenished it, ver. 2. Sidon was the eldest son of Canaan, Gen. x. 15. and the city of Sidon is mentioned by the patriarch Jacob, Gen. xlix. 13. In the days of Joshua it is called great Sidon, Josh. xi. 8. And in the days of the Judges the inhabitants of Laish are said to have dwelt careless and secure after the manner of the Sidonians, Judges xviii. 7.

But though Tyre was the daughter of Sidon, yet the daughter soon equalled, and, in time, excelled, the mother, and became the most celebrated place in the world for its trade and navigation, being the seat of commerce and the center of riches. It is therefore called by the prophet Isaiah, a mart of nations, the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth, Is. xxxiii. 3. 8. And Ezekiel (as it were commenting on the words of Isaiah, a mart of nations) recounts the various nations whose commodities were brought to Tyre, and bought and sold by the Tyrians, Ezek. xxvii.

In this wealthy and flourishing condition was Tyre when the prophets foretold its destruction, one of whom (Isaiah) mentions it at least 125 years before it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. An extensive and beneficial trade in any city soon produces luxury and pride. So it fared with the Tyrians; and for these, and their other vices, as well as for their insults and injuries done to the Jews, the Divine vengeance was denounced upon them by the prophets.

The prophet Isaiah mentions the pride of the Tyrians as being the principal occasion of their fall, *The Lord of hosts* (saith he) *hath proposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth*, Is. xxiii. 9.

Ezekiel describes at large their luxury, and particularly censures the pride of the king of Tyre in arrogating to himself divine honours. *Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God, Behold, therefore, I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations: and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness*, Ezek. xxviii. 6, &c.

The prophets Joel and Amos had before denounced the Divine judgments on the Tyrians for their wickedness in general, and in particular for their cruelty to the children of Israel, and for buying and selling them like cattle in the markets. Thus saith the Lord by the prophet Joel, *Because ye have taken my silver and my gold and have carried into your temples my goodly pleasant things: The children also of Judah, and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border: Behold, I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will return your recompence upon your own head*, Joel iii. 5, &c.

The prophet Amos speaketh to the same purpose, *Thus saith the Lord, For three transgressions of Tyrus, and for four I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, and remembered*

not the brotherly covenant, Amos i. 9. By the latter part of these words the prophet means the league and alliance between Hiram king of Tyre on the one part, and David and Solomon on the other.

The royal psalmist reckons the Tyrians among the most inveterate and implacable enemies of the Jewish name and nation, *The tabernacles of Edom* (says he) *and the Ishmaelites, of Moab, and the Hagarenes, Gaba, and Ammon, and Amalek, the Philistines, with the inhabitants of Tyre*, Psal. lxxxiii. 6, 7.

Ezekiel also begins his prophecy against the Tyrians with a declaration that the judgments denounced against them were occasioned by their domineering over the Jews, and insulting them, after the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. *Son of man, Because that Tyrus hath said against Jerusalem, Aha, she is broken that was the gates of the people; she is turned unto me, I shall be replenished, now she is laid waste: Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus; and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up*, Ezek. xxvi. 2, 3.

These were the circumstances which occasioned the prophecies against Tyre; and by carefully considering and comparing them together, we shall find that they include the following particulars, viz.

1. That the city should be taken and destroyed by the Chaldeans, or Babylonians.

2. That the inhabitants should pass the Mediterranean into the islands and countries adjoining, and even there should not find a quiet settlement.

3. That the city should be restored after seventy years, and return to her gain and her merchandise.

4. That it should be taken and destroyed again.

5. That the people should, in time, forsake their idolatry, and become converts to the true religion and worship of God; and

6. That the city should be totally destroyed, and become a place only for fishers to spread their nets upon.

On a proper examination into these respective particulars we shall find that they were not only distinctly foretold, but likewise exactly fulfilled.

1. The city should be taken and destroyed by the Chaldeans. This is expressly foretold by the prophet Ezekiel, who says, *Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, a king of kings from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people;—he shall slay thy people by the sword, and thy strong garrisons shall go down to the ground*, Ezek. xxvi. 7—11.

Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, had besieged Tyre without success; but Nebuchadnezzar was to prevail. The prophet Ezekiel not only foretold the siege, but he likewise mentions it afterwards as a past transaction, *Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus; every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled*, Ezek. xxix. 18.

We are informed by Josephus (whose authority

rity is founded on the Phœnician annals translated by Menander the Ephesian) that Nebuchadnezzar besieged Tyre thirteen years when Ithobal was king there, and that he subdued all Syria and Phœnicia. As the siege continued so long the soldiers must consequently have endured many hardships, so that hereby we better understand the justness of Ezekiel's expression, that *Nebuchadnezzar caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus; every hand was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled*—such light doth profane history cast upon sacred. It farther appears, from the Phœnician annals quoted by the same historian, that the Tyrians received their kings afterwards from Babylon, which plainly evinces that some of the blood royal must have been carried thither captives. The Phœnician annals likewise (as is clearly shewn by the learned Dr. Prideaux) agree exactly with Ezekiel's account of the time and year wherein the city was taken. Tyre therefore, according to the prophecies, was subdued and taken by Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans; after which we hear little more of that part of the city which stood upon the continent.

2. That the inhabitants of Tyre should pass over the Mediterranean into the islands and countries adjoining, and even there should find no quiet settlement. This is plainly signified by the prophet Isaiah, *Pass ye over to Tarshish* (that is, to Tartessus in Spain) *how ye inhabitants of the is.* xl. xxiii. 6. And again, *Arise, pass over to Chittim*, (that is, the islands and countries bordering upon the Mediterranean) *there also shalt thou have no rest*, ver. 12. What the prophet here delivers by way of advice is to be understood as a prediction. Ezekiel intimates the same thing, *The isles that are in the sea shall be troubled at thy departure*, Ezek. xxvi. 18.

The Phœnicians were the best navigators of antiquity, and the Tyrians in particular were celebrated for their shipping, and having colonies in different parts of the world. In this respect Tyre exceeded Sidon; she sent forth colonies into Africa and Spain, and Quintus Curtius saith, that her colonies were diffused almost over the whole world. The Tyrians, therefore, having planted colonies at Tarshish, and upon the coasts of Chittim, it was natural for them, when they were pressed with dangers and difficulties at home, to fly to their friends and countrymen abroad for refuge and protection. That they really did so is asserted by St. Jerome, whose authority is founded on the Assyrian histories, which have been since lost. “We have read (says he) “in the histories of the Assyrians, that when “the Tyrians were besieged, after they saw “no hope of resisting the enemy, they went “on board their ships, and fled to Carthage, or “to some islands of the Ionian and Ægean Sea.” And in another place he saith, “when the Tyrians saw that the works for carrying on the “siege were perfected, and the foundations of “the walls were shaken by the battering of the “rams, whatsoever precious things in gold, silver, clothes, and various kinds of furniture “the nobility had, they put them on board their “ships, and carried to the islands; so that the “city being taken, Nebuchadnezzar found no “thing worthy of his labours.”

It must certainly have been very mortifying to Nebuchadnezzar, after so long and laborious a siege, to be disappointed of the spoil of so rich a city; and therefore Ezekiel was commissioned to promise him the conquest of Egypt for his reward; *Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus: every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled: yet had he no wages, nor his army for Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey, and it shall be the wages for his army*, Ezekiel xxix. 18, 19.

But though the Tyrians should pass over to Tarshish and to Chittim, yet even there they should find no quiet settlement, *there also shalt thou have no rest*. Megasthenes, who lived about 300 years before Christ, and was employed by Seleucus Nicator in an embassy to the king of India, wrote an history of that country, in which he mentions Nebuchadnezzar as a man of the most distinguished valour and military prowess. This historian is quoted by several antient authors, and he is particularly cited by Strabo and Josephus, for saying that Nebuchadnezzar surpassed Hercules in bravery and great exploits; that he subdued great parts of Africa and Spain, and that he proceeded as far as the pillars of Hercules.

It is reasonable to suppose that after Nebuchadnezzar had subdued Tyre and Egypt, he carried his arms farther to the westward; and if he proceeded so far as Megasthenes reports, the Tyrians might well be said to *have no rest*, the conqueror pursuing them from one country to another. But besides this, and after this, the Carthagenians and other colonies of the Tyrians, lived in a very wretched state. Their history consists of little more than wars and tumults. Sicily and Spain, Europe and Africa, the land, and their own element the sea, were theatres of their calamities and miseries, till at length not only the New, but Old Carthage likewise, was utterly destroyed. As the Carthagenians sprang from the Tyrians, and the Tyrians from the Sidonians, and Sidon was the first-born of Canaan (see Gen. x. 15.) so the curse upon Canaan seemeth to have pursued them to the most distant parts of the earth.

3. The city should be restored after seventy years, and return to her gain and her merchandize. This circumstance is expressly foretold by the prophet Isaiah, *And it shall come to pass in that day that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king: (or kingdom, meaning the Babylonians, which was to continue seventy years) after the end of seventy years shall Tyre sing as an harlot. Take an harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been forgotten, make sweet melody, sing many songs that thou mayst be remembered. And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the Lord will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth*, Isaiah xxiii. 15, 16, 17. The plain meaning of these figurative expressions is, that Tyre should lie neglected of

traders and merchants for seventy years, as long as the Babylonian empire lasted, and after that she should recover her liberties and her trade; and draw in several of all nations to deal with her, and particularly the kings of the earth to buy her purples, which were worn chiefly by emperors and kings, and for which Tyre was more famous than any other place in the universe.

The time prefixed for the duration of the Babylonian empire was seventy years. So long were the nations to groan under that tyrannical yoke, though these nations were subdued, some sooner and some later than others. *These nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years; And it shall come to pass when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations,* Jer. xxv. 11, 12. And accordingly, at the end of seventy years, Cyrus and the Persians subverted the Babylonian empire, and restored the conquered nations to their liberties.

Tyre was taken by Nebuchadnezzar in the 32d year of his reign, seventy years from which time brings us down to the 19th of Darius Hystaspis. At that time it appears from history that the Ionians had rebelled against Darius, and the Phœnicians assisted him with their fleets: and consequently it is reasonable to conclude that they were now restored to their former privileges. In the succeeding reign we find that they, together with the Sidonians, furnished Xerxes with several ships for his expedition into Greece. And by the time of Alexander the Great, the Tyrians were grown to such power and greatness, that they stopped the progress of that rapid conqueror longer than any part of the Persian empire besides. But all this is to be understood of the insular Tyre; for as the old city flourished most before the time of Nebuchadnezzar, so the new city flourished most afterwards, and this is the Tyre that henceforth is so much celebrated in history.

4. The city should be taken and destroyed again. *Howl ye inhabitants of the isle, Isaiah xxiii. 6. What city is like Tyrus, like the destroyed in the midst of the sea? Ezek. xxvii. 32. They shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas, xxviii. 8.* These expressions can imply no less than that the insular Tyre should be destroyed as well as that upon the continent; and as the one was accomplished by Nebuchadnezzar, so was the other by Alexander the Great. But the same thing may be inferred more directly from the words of Zechariah, who prophesied in the reign of Darius (probably Darius Hystaspis) many years after the former destruction of the city, and consequently he must be understood to speak of this latter. His words are these: *And Tyrus did build herself a strong hold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets. Behold the Lord will cast her out, and he will smite her power in the sea, and she shall be devoured with fire,* Zech. ix. 3.

5. That Tyrus did build herself a strong hold is very certain; for her situation was exceeding strong in an island, and besides the sea to de-

send her she was fortified with a wall of 150 feet in height, and of a proportionable thickness. *She heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets;* being the most celebrated place in the world for trade and riches, *the mart of nations* as she is called; conveying the commodities of the east to the west, and of the west to the east. But yet *Behold the Lord will cast her out, and he will smite her power in the sea, and she shall be devoured with fire.* Ezekiel had likewise foretold that the city should be consumed with fire, *I will bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth, in the sight of all them that behold thee,* Ezek. xxviii. 18. And accordingly Alexander besieged, and took; and set the city on fire. The ruins of old Tyre contributed much to the taking of the new city: for with the stones and timber and rubbish of the old city Alexander made a bank, or causeway from the continent to the island, thereby literally fulfilling the words of the prophet; *They shall lay thy stones, and thy timber, and thy dust in the midst of the water,* Ezek. xxvi. 12. Alexander was seven months in completing this work, but the time and labour were well employed, for by means thereof he was enabled to storm and take the city.

At the time Alexander reduced Tyre great numbers of the inhabitants, as in the former siege, passed over the Mediterranean to the islands and countries adjoining. Both Diodorus Siculus and Quintus Curtius testify that they sent their wives and children to Carthage; and upon the taking of the place the Sidonians secretly conveyed away fifteen thousand more in their ships. Happy were they who thus escaped, for of those who remained behind the conqueror slew eight thousand in storming and taking the city, caused two thousand afterwards to be crucified, and thirty thousand he sold for slaves. They had before sold some of the captive Jews, and now it was returned upon them according to the prediction of Joel, *The children also of Judah, and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold; Behold I will return your recompence upon your own head, and will sell your sons and your daughters,* Joel iii. 6, 7, 8.

When the old city was taken the Tyrians received their kings afterwards from Babylon; but when the new one was conquered by Alexander, their king held the sovereignty by his appointment. The cases are in many respects, alike; but the city recovered much sooner from the calamities of the last siege than the first. In the space of nineteen years it was able to withstand the fleets and armies of Antigonius, and sustained a siege of fifteen months before it was taken: a plain proof (as Dean Prideaux observes) “ of the great advantage of trade: for this city being “ the grand mart where most of the trade both “ of the east and west did center, by virtue here- “ of it was that it soon after revived to its primitive vigour.”

5. There should come a time when the Tyrians would forsake their idolatry, and become converts to the true religion and worship of God. The Psalmist is thought to have hinted as much in saying, *The daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift,* Psal. xlv. 12. And again, *The kings*

of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents, Psal. lxxii. 10. Zechariah, when he foretells the calamities which the Tyrians and neighbouring nations should suffer from Alexander, at the same time predicts their conversion to the true God; but he that remaineth, even he shall be for our God, Zech. ix. 7. This prediction is more fully expressed by the prophet Isaiah, who says, *And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord: it shall not be treasured, nor laid up: for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing,* Isaiah xxiii. 18.

The Tyrians were greatly addicted to the worship of Hercules, as he was called by the Greeks, or of Baal, as he is denominated in scripture. But in process of time, by means of some Jews and proselytes living and conversing among them, many were converted to the Jewish religion; so that a great multitude of people from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon came to hear Our Saviour and to be healed of their diseases, Luke vi. 17. And when St. Paul, in his way to Jerusalem, came to Tyre, he found disciples there who were inspired and prophesied; and with them he tarried seven days, Acts xxi. 4.

During the time of Dioclesian's persecution the Tyrians were such sincere converts to Christianity that many of them suffered the most horrid deaths, and died martyrs to the religion they then professed*. After the storm of persecution was blown over they (under their bishop Paulinus) built an oratory, or rather a temple, for the public worship of God, the most magnificent and sumptuous in all Palestine and Phœnicia. On this occasion Eusebius, on commenting on the passage of Isaiah, *And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord,* says, "Since a church of God hath been founded in Tyre, as well as in other nations, many of its goods gotten by merchandise are consecrated to the Lord, being offered to his church, (as he afterwards explains himself) for the use of the ministers of the altar or gospel, according to the institution of our Lord, that they who wait at the altar should live of the altar." In like manner speaks St. Jerome, "We may behold churches in Tyre built to Christ: we may see their riches that they are not laid up, nor treasured, but given to those who dwell before the Lord. For the Lord hath appointed, that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

To these proofs we shall only add, that as Tyre consecrated its merchandise and hire unto the Lord, so it had the honour not only of being created into an archbishopric, but was the first archbishopric under the patriarchate of Jerusalem, having fourteen bishops under its primacy; and in this state it continued several years.

6. But, after all, Tyre was to be totally de-

stroyed, and become a place only for fishers to spread their nets upon. When the prophets denounced the destruction of any city or country, it was not intended that such denunciation should take effect immediately. It was threatened that Babylon should become a desolation without an inhabitant, but many ages passed before it was reduced to that condition; it decayed by degrees, till at length it came to nothing. In like manner Tyre was not to be ruined and desolated all at once. Many events were to happen previous to its final destruction, and before the prophecies of Ezekiel could be fully accomplished. *Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up: And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers; I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock: it shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea; for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God,* Ezek. xxvi. 3, 4, 5. And again, *I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more; though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again,* ver. 21.

The prophecies of Tyre, like those relative to most other places, were to receive their completion by degrees. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the old city, and Alexander employed the ruins and rubbish in making his causeway from the continent to the island, which henceforwards were joined together. "It is no wonder, therefore, (as Bishop Pocock observes) that there are no signs of the antient city; and, as it is a sandy shore, the face of every thing is altered, and the great aqueduct in many parts, is almost buried in the sand." So that as to this part of the city, the prophecy hath been literally fulfilled. *Thou shalt be built no more; though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again.*

It may be questioned whether the new city ever arose to that height of power, wealth, and greatness, to which it was elevated in the times of Isaiah and Ezekiel. It received a great blow from Alexander, not only by his taking and burning the city, but much more by his building of Alexandria in Egypt, which in time deprived it of much of its trade, and thereby contributed more effectually to its ruin. It had the misfortune afterwards of changing its masters often, being sometimes in the hands of the Ptolemies kings of Egypt, and sometimes of the kings of Syria, till at length it fell under the dominion of the Romans. It was taken by the Saracens about the year of Christ 639 in the reign of Omar their third emperor. It was retaken by the Christians during the time of the holy war in the year 1124, Baldwin the second of that name being then king of Jerusalem, and assisted by a fleet of the Venetians. From the Christians

* Those who may be desirous of being fully acquainted with the particulars of these persecutions, as well as those exercised, in different ages, and in all parts of the world, on the Christians, are referred to an excellent work lately published, intitled, *The New Book of Martyrs; or, Complete Christian Martyrology. Containing an authentic and genuine Historical Account of the many dreadful Persecutions against the Church of Christ, in all Parts of the World, by Pagans, Jews, Turks, Popists and others, from the earliest ages of the Church to the present period.* By

the Rev. Henry Southwell, LL.D. Author of the *Universal Family Bible*. This Work is published in 40 Numbers, (Price Six pence each) every one of which is adorned with one or more beautiful copper plates, representing either the mode of torturing and tormenting Christians for their constancy, putting them to death for their faith, or displaying some general scene, in which Pagan Barbarity, and Popish Cruelty are exhibited in the most striking manner. Printed for J. Cooke, No. 17, Paternoster-Row.

Christians it was again taken in the year 1289 by the Mamalucs of Egypt, under their Sultan Alphix, who sacked and rased this and Sidon and other strong towns, that they might not ever again afford any harbour or shelter to the Christians. From the Mamalucs it was again taken in the year 1516 by Selim, the ninth emperor of the Turks; and under their dominion it continues at present. But, alas! how fallen, how changed from what it was formerly! Instead of being the center of trade, and frequented by the merchant ships of the east and west, it is now become an heap of ruins, and visited only by a few poor fishermen. So that as to this part likewise of the city the prophecy hath been literally fulfilled, *I will make thee like the top of a rock; thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon.*

The description given of this once opulent and magnificent city by Mr. Maundrell, in his journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, is as follows: "This city (saith he) standing in the sea upon a peninsula, promises, at a distance, something very magnificent. But when you come to it, you find no similitude of that glory for which it was so renowned in antient times, and which is described by the prophet Ezekiel, chap. xxvi, &c. On the north side it hath an old Turkish ungarrisoned castle; besides which you see nothing here but a mere Babel of broken walls, pillars, vaults, &c. there being not so much as one entire

house left: its present inhabitants are only a few poor wretches harbouring themselves in the vaults, and subsisting chiefly on fishing; who seem to be preserved in this place by Divine Providence, as a visible argument how God has fulfilled his word concerning Tyre, viz. *that it should be as the top of a rock, a place for fishers to dry their nets on.*"

This account of Mr. Maundrell's is corroborated by Mr. Middleton in his New System of Geography lately published. "This powerful city (says he, speaking of Tyre) once the capital of Phœnicia, the emporium of commerce; and mistress of the sea; equally famed for its trade, beauty and opulence, and for many ages deemed impregnable; both from its almost inaccessible situation; and the strength of its fortifications made by art, is now a mere desert; and cannot boast of one house left entire. Its present inhabitants are only a few very poor people, who dwell in caverns, and subsist by fishing."

Such hath been the fate of the once famous city of Tyre, on which the Divine vengeance was denounced for the great pride of its inhabitants; and in the destruction of which we have an additional instance to those already mentioned of the great truth of the Divine predictions, as spoken by the mouths of the prophets.

C H A P. XI.

Of the Prophecies concerning EGYPT.

THE kingdom of Egypt is one of the most antient in the world, it having been in a very flourishing state even during the days of Abraham; and the inhabitants of it were distinguished for having more wisdom than any other people at that time on the face of the earth. It was (as we may call it) the great academy of the earlier ages. Hither the wits and sages of Greece, and other countries, repaired, and received their learning at this fountain. It is mentioned to the commendation of Moses, that he *was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians*, Acts vii. 22. and the highest character given of Solomon's wisdom is, that it *excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt*, 1 Kings iv. 30. But with this wisdom it was early corrupted, and was as much the parent of superstition as it was the mistress of learning; and the one, as well as the other, were from thence propagated and diffused over other countries. It was, indeed, the grand corruptor of the world, the source of polytheism and idolatry to several of the eastern, and to most of the western nations, and at length degenerated to such a degree as not to be equalled by any other country in the universe.

While the Israelites remained in Egypt during

their state of bondage, they acquired many of the maxims of the natives, and retained a fondness for the Egyptian idols ever after. Several of Moses's laws and institutions were evidently calculated to wean them from, and to guard them against, the manners and customs of the Egyptians. But still in their hearts and affections they were much inclined to return into Egypt. Even Solomon married a woman from that country: and, on many occasions, the Israelites courted the friendship and alliance of Egypt in preference to any of the neighbouring powers. This prejudice is the more extraordinary, as the Egyptians generally treated them not only with disrespect, but took every advantage they could of doing them the greatest injuries. They oppressed them with the most cruel servitude during their state of bondage. They at length gave them leave to depart, and then pursued them as fugitives. Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and plundered it, 1 Kings xiv. 25, 26. And in all their leagues and alliances Egypt was to the Israelites as a *broken reed, whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it*, Isaiah xxxvi. 6.

When we consider these circumstances it is not to be wondered at that Egypt should be the

the subject of several prophecies; and we shall find on examination, that these prophecies consisted of the principal revolutions that were to happen in that kingdom, and which were to take place from the days of the prophets, and continue to the present time.

The first great revolution that happened in Egypt (after the prophecies denounced against it) was the conquest of it by Nebuchadnezzar, which was particularly foretold by Jeremiah and Ezekiel. These two prophets have employed several sections or chapters upon this occasion. Jeremiah was carried into Egypt, where he foretold the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon: and some of his prophecies are intitled *The word that the Lord spake to Jeremiah the prophet, how Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon should come and smite the land of Egypt*, Jer. xlv. 13. Ezekiel also declares, *Thus saith the Lord God, I will also make the multitude of Egypt to cease by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon: He and his people with him, the terrible of the nations shall be brought to destroy the land; and they shall draw their swords against Egypt, and fill the land with the slain*, Ezek. xxx. 10, 11. The conquest of this kingdom was promised to Nebuchadnezzar as a reward for his services against Tyre, which after a long siege he took and destroyed, but was disappointed of the spoil, as we have already observed in the foregoing chapter.

That this prophecy was strictly fulfilled appears from the testimonies of Megasthenes and Berofus, two heathen historians, one of whom expressly affirms that Nebuchadnezzar conquered the greatest part of Africa; and the other affirms it in effect, by saying, that when Nebuchadnezzar heard of the death of his father, having settled his affairs in Egypt, and committed the captives whom he took there to the care of some of his friends to bring them after him, he hastened directly to Babylon.

The testimonies of these two are confirmed by Josephus, who says, that Nebuchadnezzar, having subdued Cœlo-Syria, waged war against the Ammonites and Moabites; and having conquered them he invaded Egypt, slew Pharaoh-Hophra their king, and appointed another in his stead. This monarch is represented by Ezekiel as an arrogant, impious prince: he calls him *the great dragon* (or crocodile) *that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, my river is my own, and I have made it for myself*, Ezekiel xxix. 3. Agreeable to this Herodotus informs us, that he proudly and wickedly boasted of having established his kingdom so surely, that it was not in the power of God himself to dispossess him of it. For this presumption he was justly cut off, and the prediction foretold by Jeremiah was fully accomplished, *Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will give Pharaoh-Hophra king of Egypt into the hand of his enemies, and into the hand of them that seek his life*, Jer. xlv. 30.

It was foretold by the prophet Ezekiel, that the country should be desolate forty years, and the people carried captives into other countries, *I will make the land of Egypt desolate forty years; and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries*, Ezek. xxix. 12. Though it cannot, indeed, be proved

from heathen authors, that this desolation of the country continued exactly forty years, yet there is not the least doubt but this, as well as the other conquered countries, laboured under the Babylonish yoke till the time of Cyrus. We are assured, by Berofus, that Nebuchadnezzar took several captives from Egypt, and carried them to Babylon; and from Megasthenes we learn, that he transplanted, and settled others in Pontus. So true it is that they were *scattered among the nations, and dispersed through the countries*; and the greater part of them might, probably, after the dissolution of the Babylonish empire, return to their native country.

The next memorable revolution that happened in Egypt was, the invasion and subduction of it by Cambyfes and the Persians, which is the principal subject of the 19th chapter of the prophet Isaiah. Some parts, indeed, of this prophecy have a near affinity with those of Jeremiah and Ezekiel concerning the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar: but this prophecy, as well as several others, might admit of a double completion, and be fulfilled at both those periods. This prophecy of Isaiah is a general representation of the calamities that should befall the nation: it includes various particulars, and is applicable to Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians, as well as to Cambyfes and the Persians. They might, therefore, be both intended and comprehended in it; but the latter, it is most reasonable to imagine, were principally meant, and for this reason; because the deliverance of the Egyptians by some great conqueror, and their conversion afterwards to the true religion, which are foretold in the latter part of this chapter, were events consequent to the dominion of the Persians, and not to that of the Babylonians.

Isaiah begins his prophecy against Egypt with declaring that the conquest of it should be swift and sudden, and that the idols of Egypt should be destroyed. *Behold, (says he) the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt, and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it*, Isaiah xix. 1. The same thing is foretold of Nebuchadnezzar by the prophet Jeremiah, *And when he cometh, he shall smite the land of Egypt—And I will kindle a fire in the houses of the gods of Egypt, and he shall burn them, and carry them away captives—He shall break also the images of Bethshemesh, that is in the land of Egypt; and the houses of the gods of the Egyptians shall be burn with fire*, Jer. xliii. 11, &c. And again the prophet Ezekiel, *Thus saith the Lord God, I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause their images to cease out of Noph, or Memphis*, Ezek. xxx. 13.

The first attempt made by Cambyfes was upon Pelusium, a strong town at the entrance of Egypt, and the key of the kingdom; and he succeeded by the stratagem of placing before his army a great number of dogs, sheep, cats, and other animals, which being held sacred by the Egyptians, not one of them would cast a javelin, or shoot an arrow that way; and so the town was stormed and taken in a manner without resistance. He treated the gods of Egypt with great contempt, laughed at the people,

and

and chastised the priests for worshipping such deities. He slew Apis, or the sacred ox (which the Egyptians worshipped) with his own hand; and burnt and demolished their other idols and temples; and would likewise, if he had not been prevented, have destroyed the famous temple of Jupiter Hammon. Ochus too, who was another king of Persia, and subdued the Egyptians again after they had revolted, plundered their temples, and caused another Apis to be slain and served up at a banquet he had appointed in consequence of his victories.

It was also foretold, by the prophet Isaiah, that they should be miserably distracted with civil wars, *and I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians; and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbour, city against city, and kingdom against kingdom*, Isaiah xix. 2. Egypt was divided into twelve prefectures, or provinces, over each of which presided a petty prince, or governor. These disagreeing with each other civil wars took place, and, for a considerable time, the whole kingdom was one continued scene of anarchy and confusion. It is, therefore, little to be wondered at that in such distractions as these the Egyptians, who were naturally a cowardly people, should be destitute of counsel, and that *the spirit of Egypt should fail in the midst thereof*, as is foretold by the prophet in ver. 3. and that being also a very superstitious people, *they should seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards*. But their divination was all in vain; it was their fate to be subdued and oppressed by cruel lords and tyrants, *And the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts*, ver. 4. This is a very essential part of the prophecy, and may with the greatest propriety and justice, be applied to the Persians, and especially to Cambyfes and Ochus, the former of whom put the yoke on the necks of the Egyptians, and the latter rivetted it. Ochus was the cruellest and worst of all the kings of Persia, and was so destructive and oppressive to Egypt in particular, that his favourite eunuch Bagoas, who was an Egyptian, in revenge of his injured country, poisoned him. No other allegation is wanting to prove, that the Persian yoke was more galling and intolerable to the Egyptians than their frequent revolts and rebellions, which instead of being any benefit to them, only served to enslave them the more, and augment their misery.

The prophet, after denouncing these judgments against the Egyptians, next proceeds to set forth, in figurative language, the consequences of this subjection and slavery, the poverty and want, the mourning and lamentation, the confusion and misery, which should be entailed on them and their posterity: after which he recounts the immediate causes of these evils, the folly of the princes and rulers who valued themselves upon their wisdom, and the cowardice and effeminacy of the people in general. These things will plainly appear to any one who attentively peruses the history of that nation, the particulars of which are too considerable to be here admitted. It may, however, in general, be said, that

Egypt would not have become a prey to so many foreign enemies, had it not been for the excessive weakness of the people both in counsel and in action. They had not the courage even to defend themselves. They trusted chiefly to their Grecian and other mercenaries, who, instead of defending, were often the first to betray them.

The next memorable revolution was effected by Alexander the Great who subverted the Persian empire in Egypt as well as in other places; and this event is particularly pointed out in the same 19th chapter of the prophet Isaiah. It is also foretold, that about the same time several of the Egyptians should lay aside their idolatry, and be converted to the worship of the true God. *In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord. And it shall be for a sign, and for a witness unto the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressor, and he shall send them a saviour and a great one, and he shall deliver them. And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation, yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord; and perform it*, Isaiah xix. 19, &c.

The prophet then proceeds to show, that Assyria and Egypt, which used to be at great enmity with each other, should be united in the same worship by the intermediation of Israel, and that those three should be a blessing on the earth. *In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt, and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: whom the Lord shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance*, ver. 23, &c.

It is clearly foretold by the prophet, that a great prince, from a foreign country, should deliver the Egyptians from their Persian oppressors, and heal their country, which was smitten of God, and afflicted. And who could this be but Alexander, who is always distinguished by the additional epithet *the Great*, and whose first successor in Egypt was called the great Ptolemy and Ptolemy Soter, or *the saviour*? When Alexander went first into Egypt the people all cheerfully submitted to him out of hatred to the Persians, so that he became master of the country without any opposition. For this reason he treated them with great humanity and kindness, built a city there, which, after his own name, he called Alexandria, appointed one of his own country for their civil governor, and permitted them to be governed by their own laws and customs. By these changes and regulations, and by the prudent and gentle administration of some of the first Ptolemies, Egypt revived, trade and learning flourished, and, for a time, the land was blessed with peace and plenty.

The prophet likewise foretels, that about the same time the true religion, and the true worship of the God of Israel, should begin to spread, and prevail in the land of Egypt: and what event was ever more unlikely to happen than the conversion of a people so sunk and lost in

superstition and idolatry of the worst and grossest kind? But that it did happen will appear from what follows.

It is certain that many of the Jews, after Nebuchadnezzar had taken Jerusalem, fled into Egypt, and with them went Jeremiah the prophet, who there delivered most of his prophecies concerning the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar. From thence some knowledge of God, and some notices of the prophecies, might easily be received by the Egyptians. This alteration was to take place principally in *five cities*, which accordingly came to pass. The first city in which the true worship of God was received was *Heliopolis*; the second *Migdol*, or *Magdolum*; the third, *Takpanhes*, or *Daphne*; the fourth, *Noph*, or *Memphis*; and the fifth, *in the country of Pathros*, or *Thebais*; all of which are particularly mentioned by the prophet Jeremiah, chap. xlv. 1.

In these cities, at that time, many Jews resided; and though they were, in general, very wicked men, and disobedient to the word of God, yet, no doubt, some good people were mingled among them, who might relate to them the prophecies of Jeremiah, and they themselves, when they saw them fulfilled, might embrace the Jewish religion. This, however, is not to be understood of all the inhabitants of those places, but only of some, which is sufficient to justify the expression of *five cities speaking the language of Canaan, and declaring by the Lord of hosts*. The prediction of the prophet Zephaniah is to the same effect: *Then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may call upon the name of the Lord to serve him with one consent*, Zeph. iii. 9.

After Alexander the Great had made a conquest of Egypt, he transplanted many of the Jews into his new city of Alexandria, and allowed them many privileges and immunities equal to those enjoyed by the Macedonians. Ptolemy Soter carried more of them into Egypt, and they received such indulgencies that many others followed them of their own accord. Ptolemy Philadelphus redeemed and released the captive Jews; and in his reign, or his father's, the books of Moses were translated into Greek, and afterwards the other parts of the Old Testament. The third Ptolemy, called Euergetes, having subdued all Syria, did not sacrifice to the idols of Egypt in acknowledgment of his victory; but going to Jerusalem made his oblations to God after the manner of the Jews, and his example, no doubt, was followed by many of his subjects. The sixth Ptolemy, called Philometor, committed the whole management of his kingdom to two Jews, Onias and Dositheus, who were his chief ministers and generals, and had the principal direction of all affairs, both civil and military. This Onias obtained a licence from the king to build a temple for the Jews in Egypt like that at Jerusalem, alledging for the purpose this very prophecy of Isaiah, that there should be *an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt*: and the king and queen in their edict make honourable mention of the law and of the prophet Isaiah, and express a dread of sinning against God. The place, chosen for the building of this temple, was in the prefecture

of *Heliopolis*, or *the city of the sun*, which place is likewise mentioned in the prophecy. It was built after the model of the temple at Jerusalem, but not so sumptuous and magnificent. Philometor himself was made high-priest; other priests and Levites were appointed for the ministration; and Divine service was daily performed there in the same manner as at Jerusalem. By these means *the Egyptians must have known the Lord*; and without doubt there must have been many proselytes among them. Amidst those who came up to the feast of Pentecost, there are particularly mentioned *the dwellers in Egypt and in the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, Jews and proselytes*, Acts ii. 10.

Thus were the Jews settled and encouraged in Egypt; nor were they less favoured by the kings of Syria. Seleucus Nicator made them free of the cities which he built in Asia and the Lower Syria, and even of Antioch, the capital of his kingdom; and granted the same rights and privileges to them as to the Greeks and Macedonians. Antiochus the Great published several decrees in favour of the Jews, both of those who inhabited Jerusalem, and of those who dwelt in Mesopotamia and Babylon. And thus, by means of the Jews and proselytes dwelling in Egypt and Syria, Israel, Egypt and Syria, were, in some measure, united in the same worship. But this was more fully accomplished when the inhabitants of these countries became Christians, and were made members of the church of Christ. And it is to be seriously hoped and believed, that the prophecy will still receive its most perfect completion in the latter days, when Mahometanism shall be rooted out, and Christianity shall again flourish in these countries, when *the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in, and all Israel shall be saved*.

The fate of Egypt, from the days of Nebuchadnezzar to the present period, is predicted, in a most remarkable manner, by the prophet Ezekiel. He foretels, that after the desolation of the land, it should be *a base kingdom: it shall be the basest of the kingdoms, neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations: for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations*, Ezek. xxix. 14, 15. And again, *I will sell the land into the hand of the wicked, and I will make the land waste, and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers: and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt*, Ezek. xxx. 12, 13.

In order to point out the great truth of the fulfilment of this remarkable prophecy, we must advert to, and make a short deduction from the Egyptian History, at least that part of it which contains the various circumstances that took place from the subduction of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar, to the present period.

After Nebuchadnezzar had conquered the Egyptians he appointed Amasis for their king; and as he held his crown by the permission and allowance of the Babylonians, there is not the least doubt but he paid them tribute for it. Berossus, the Chaldean historian, speaketh of Nebuchadnezzar's reducing Egypt to his obedience, and afterwards of his settling the affairs of the country, and carrying away captives from thence to Babylon. By his settling the affairs of Egypt

nothing

nothing less could be meant than his appointing the governors, and the tribute that they should pay to him: and by carrying some Egyptians captives to Babylon he certainly intended not only to weaken the country, but also to have them as hostages to secure the obedience of the rest, and the payment of their tribute.

After the fall of the Babylonish empire, Cyrus established the Persian on its ruins; and it is affirmed, by that faithful and elegant historian Xenophon, that Cyrus also conquered Egypt, and made it part of his empire. But whether this was so or not, it is universally allowed that Cambyfes, the son of Cyrus, did conquer Egypt, and deprived Psammenitus (the then king) of his crown, to which he had newly succeeded upon the death of Amasis. Cambyfes purposed to have made Psammenitus administrator of the kingdom under him, as it was the custom of the Persians to do to the conquered princes: but Psammenitus forming schemes to recover the kingdom, and being convicted thereof, was put to death. The Egyptians groaned under the yoke near forty years. They then revolted towards the latter end of the reign of Darius the son of Hytaspes: but his son and successor Xerxes, in the second year of his reign, subdued them again, and reduced them to a worse condition of servitude than they had been in under Darius, and appointed his brother Achæmenes governor of Egypt. About twenty-four years after this (when the Egyptians heard of the troubles in Persia about the succession to the throne after the death of Xerxes) they revolted again at the instigation of Inarus king of Lybia; and having driven away the Persian tribute-collectors, they constituted Inarus their king. Six years were employed in reducing them to obedience, and all Egypt submitted again to king Artaxerxes Longimanus, except Amyrtæus, who reigned in the fens, whither the Persians could not approach to take him. Inarus, who was the author of these evils, being betrayed to the Persians, was taken and crucified. They, however, permitted his son Thannyra to succeed his father in the kingdom of Lybia; and Egypt continued in subjection all the remaining part of the long reign of Artaxerxes. In the tenth year of Darius Nothus they revolted again under the conduct of Amyrtæus, who sallied out of the fens, drove the Persians from Egypt, and made himself master of the country. Amyrtæus was succeeded by his son Psufiris, who (according to Herodotus) obtained the kingdom by the favour of the Persians, from whence it appears that the Persians had again subdued Egypt, or, at least, that the king was not established without their consent and approbation. It is certain, however, that after this the Egyptians gave much trouble to the Persians. Artaxerxes Mnemon made several efforts to reconquer the country, but they all proved ineffectual. It was not totally and finally subdued till the ninth year of the following reign of Ochus, about 350 years before Christ; when Nectanebus the last king fled into Ethiopia, and Ochus became absolute master of the country, and having appointed one of his nobles, named Pherendates, to be his viceroy and governor of Egypt, he returned with

great glory, and with immense treasures to Babylon. Egypt from that time hath never been able to recover its liberties: It hath always been subject to strangers, and never governed by a king of its own, whereby hath been amply fulfilled that part of Ezekiel's prophecy, in which it is said, *there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt.*

After the Persians, Egypt came into the hands of the Macedonians. It submitted to Alexander the Great without attempting the least resistance; and on his death it fell to the share of Ptolemy, one of his four famous captains, and was governed by his family for several generations. The two or three first of the Ptolemies were wise and potent princes, but most of the rest (of which there were eleven in number) were prodigies of luxury and wickedness. It is observed by Strabo, that all after the third Ptolemy governed very ill; but those who governed worst of all were the fourth, the seventh, and the last, called Auletes. The persons here alluded to by Strabo were, Ptolemy Philopater, or *the lover of his father*, so called by way of irony, because he was a parricide, and murdered both his father and mother: Ptolemy Physcon, who affected the title of *Euergetes*, or the *benefactor*, but the Alexandrians more justly named him Kakergetes, or the *malefactor*, on account of his distinguished wickedness; and Ptolemy Auletes, or *the piper*, so denominated because he spent much of his time playing on the pipe, and used to contend for the prize in the public shows. This kingdom of the Macedonians continued from the death of Alexander 294 years, and ended in the famous Cleopatra, who, as the celebrated Mr. Middleton observes, was one of the most ambitious and wicked princesses that ever sat upon a throne.

After the downfall of the Macedonians, Egypt fell under the dominion of the Romans. They had, indeed, either by virtue of treaties, or by force of arms, obtained great authority there, and were, in a manner, arbiters of the kingdom before. But after the death of Cleopatra, Octavius Cæsar reduced it into the form of a Roman province, and appointed Cornelius Gallus the first prefect or governor. It remained in this state, with little variation, till the year 641 after Christ, that is, 670 years in the whole, from the reign of Augustus Cæsar to that of the emperor Heraclius. It was at that period that the Saracens, in the reign of Omar their third emperor, and under the command of Amrou, invaded and conquered Egypt, took Misrah (formerly called Memphis, but now Cairo) by storm, and also Alexandria, after they had besieged it fourteen months, and had lost no less than 23,000 men. But the greatest loss in the destruction of the latter place was the famous library, founded by the first Ptolemies, and so much enlarged and improved by their successors, that the books contained in it amounted to 700,000 volumes, all of which were committed to the flames. Before this event, Egypt was frequented by learned foreigners from almost all parts, and it produced several learned natives; but afterwards it became more and more a *base kingdom*, and sunk into the greatest ignorance and superstition. Mahometanism was established there

there instead of Christianity, and the government of the caliphs and sultans continued till about the year 1250 after Christ.

It was about this time that the Mamalucs * usurped the royal authority. Their government began with the Sultan Ibeg in the 648th year of the Hegira and the year of Christ 1250; and continued through a series of twenty-four Turkish and twenty-three Circassian Mamaluc Sultans, ending with Tumanbai, in the year of Christ 1517. At that time Selim, the ninth emperor of the Turks, conquered the Mamalucs, hanged their last Sultan Tumanbai before one of the gates of Cairo, and put an end to their government. He caused five hundred of the chiefest Egyptian families to be transplanted to Constantinople, as likewise great numbers of the wives and children of the Mamalucs, besides the Sultan's treasure and other immense riches; and annexed Egypt to the Ottoman empire, whereof it hath continued a province from that day to this. It is governed by a Turkish Basia with twenty-four *begs* or princes under him, who are advanced from servitude to the administration of public affairs; a superstitious notion possessing the Egyptians, that it is decreed by fate, that captives shall reign, and the natives be subject to them. But it is not merely a superstitious notion, but a notion in all probability at first derived from some tradition of these prophecies, that *Egypt should be a base kingdom*, and that *there should be no more a prince of the land of Egypt*.

Such are the events which have taken place in Egypt, and such has been the fulfilment of the prophecy of Ezekiel, relative to the destruction of this once flourishing and important kingdom. At the time this prophecy was delivered, who could pretend to say, upon human conjecture, that so great a kingdom, so rich and fertile a country, should ever after become tributary and subject to strangers? It is now more than two thousand years since this prophecy was first delivered; and what likelihood or appearance was there, that the Egyptians should, for so many ages, bow under a foreign yoke, and never, in all that time, be able to recover their liberties, and have a prince of their own to reign over them? But as is the prophecy, so is the event: for not long after it was delivered Egypt was conquered by the Babylonians, and after the Babylonians by the Persians; and after the Persians it became subject to the Macedonians, and after the Macedonians to the Romans, and after the Romans to the Saracens, and then to the Mamalucs; and it is now a province to the Turkish empire.

* The word Mamaluc signifies, in general, a slave bought with money, but it is appropriated in particular to those Turkish and Circassian slaves, whom the sultans of Egypt bought very young, trained up in military exercises, and made them the choicest officers and soldiers, and by them

We have now beheld in what manner the cities of Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre and Egypt (four of the greatest kingdoms during their respective flourishing states in the universe) were visited by Divine vengeance for their enmity to, and persecution of, the Jews, the chosen people of God. But besides this sin, all these nations were guilty of many others. Egypt, in particular, was so severely threatened for her idolatry, her pride and her wickedness. The Egyptians have generally been more wicked than other nations. Antient authors describe them every where as superstitious and luxurious, as an unwarlike and unserviceable people, as a faithless and fallacious nation, always meaning one thing and pretending another, as lovers of wine and strong drink, as cruel in their anger, as thieves and tolerating all kinds of theft, as patient of tortures, and though put to the rack, yet choosing rather to die than to confess the truth. Modern authors paint them still in blacker colours. The famous Thevenot is very strong and severe; "The people of Egypt (says he, generally speaking) are all swarthy, exceedingly wicked, great rogues, cowardly, lazy, hypocrites, liars, robbers, treacherous, so very greedy of money, that they will kill a man for a *maiden* or three halfpence." Bishop Pocock's character of them is not much more favourable, though not so harsh and opprobrious; "The natives of Egypt (says he) are now a slothful people, and delight in sitting still, hearing tales, and indeed seem always to have been more fit for the quiet life, than for any active scenes. They are also malicious and envious to a great degree, which keeps them from uniting and setting up for themselves; and though they are very ignorant, yet they have a natural cunning and artifice as well as falsehood, and this makes them always suspicious of travellers. The love of money is so rooted in them, that nothing is to be done without bribery. They think the greatest villainies are expiated, when once they have washed their hands and feet. Their words pass for nothing, either in relations, promises, or professions of friendship, &c."

Such is the state of the Egyptians at the present period, and such has been the punishment inflicted on them for their manifold sins and transgressions, whereby that excellent political aphorism of the wisest of kings is fully verified, *righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach and ruin to any people*, Proverbs xiv. 34.

controuled their subjects, and subdued their enemies. These slaves, finding how necessary and useful they were, grew at length insolent and audacious, slew their sovereigns, and usurped the government to themselves.

C H A P. XII.

The Prophecies of DANIEL, and his Interpretation of the remarkable Dream of NEBUCHADNEZZAR king of BABYLON.

THE first prophecy of Daniel, and on which, indeed, all the succeeding ones were founded, was his interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. This monarch, in the second year of his reign; having subdued all his enemies; and firmly established his throne, was thinking upon his bed what should come to pass hereafter; what should be the future success of his family and kingdom, and whether any, or what families and kingdoms, might arise after his own: and as our waking thoughts generally give some tincture to our dreams, he dreamed of something to the same purpose, which astonished him, but which he could not rightly understand. The dream greatly affected him at the time; but, awaking in confusion, he had but an imperfect remembrance of it. He therefore called for the magicians and astrologers, and as absurdly as imperiously demanded of them, upon pain of death and destruction, to make known unto him both the dream and the interpretation thereof. They answered with great reason, that no king had ever required such a thing, that it transcended all the powers and faculties of man, and that God alone, or only beings like him, could disclose it. *There is not a man upon earth that can show the king's matter; therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean: and it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can show it before the king, except the God, whose dwelling is not of the flesh,* Dan. ii. 10, 11.

But the pride of absolute power cannot listen to reason, or hear any controul. Nebuchadnezzar was so incensed at this reply, that he ordered all the magicians and wise men of Babylon to be destroyed. *For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon,* ver. 12. Daniel and his companions would have been involved in the same fate as the rest; but by their joint and earnest prayers to God, the secret was revealed unto Daniel in a night-vision; and Daniel blessed the God of Heaven.

Daniel, having received these instructions, was desirous to save the lives of the wise men of Babylon, who were so unjustly condemned, as well as his own. He therefore went unto Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, whom the king had ordered to destroy the wise men of Babylon: and said thus unto him, *Destroy not the wise men of Babylon; bring me in before the king, and I will show unto the king the interpretation,* ver. 24, &c. The captain of the guard immediately intro-

duced him to the king, saying, *I have found a man of the captives of Judah that will make known unto the king the interpretation,* ver. 25. Daniel was far from assuming any merit to himself; he modestly told Nebuchadnezzar that *this secret, which the wiser men, astrologers, magicians and soothsayers could not show unto the king, was not revealed to him for any wisdom that he had more than others: but (says he) there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days,* Dan. ii. 27, &c. Having said this, Daniel not only told him what he saw in his dream, but also what he thought within himself before his dream. *As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind, upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that reveleth secrets maketh known unto thee what shall come to pass.*

Nebuchadnezzar's dream was of a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before him, and the form thereof was terrible. It appears, from antient coins and medals, that cities and people were often represented by figures of men and women. A great terrible figure was therefore not an improper emblem of human power and dominion; and the various metals of which it was composed, not unfitly typify the various kingdoms which should arise. It consisted of four different metals, gold and silver and brass and iron with clay; and these four metals, according to Daniel's own interpretation, mean so many kingdoms: and the order of their succession is clearly denoted by the order of the parts, the head and higher parts signifying the earlier times, and the lower parts, the later times. From hence, it is conjectured by Calvin, the poets drew their fables of the four ages of the world, namely, the golden, the silver, the brazen, and the iron age.

These different kingdoms will naturally constitute the different heads of our discourse on Daniel's prophecy and interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream; in the explanation of which we shall follow the best commentators on the subject, but at the same time shall not regard any commentator so much as the truth of history, the evidence of reason, and the analogy of scripture.

This image's head was of fine gold, Dan. ii. 32, which the prophet thus interprets, *Thou art this head of gold,* ver. 38. thou, and thy family, and thy representatives. The Babylonian, therefore, was the first of these kingdoms; and it was fitly represented by the head of fine gold,

on account of its great riches; and Babylon, for the same reason, was called by Isaiah, *the golden city*, Is. xiv. 4.

Daniel addresseth Nebuchadnezzar as a very powerful king, *Thou, O king, art a king of kings*, ver. 37. Nebuchadnezzar might, perhaps, think, like some of his predecessors, that his conquests were owing to his own fortitude and prudence: but the prophet assures him his successes must be primarily imputed to the God of heaven, *For the God of heaven (saith he) hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory*.

Though almost all the antient eastern histories are lost, yet there are some fragments preserved, which speak of this mighty conqueror and his extended empire; Berofus saith, that he held in subjection Egypt, Syria, Phœnicia, Arabia, and, by his exploits, surpassed all the Chaldeans and Babylonians who reigned before him. Josephus (who has quoted Berofus on this occasion) subjoins, that in the archives of the Phœnicians there are written things consonant to those which are said by Berofus concerning Nebuchadnezzar, namely, that he subdued Syria and all Phœnicia. Megasthenes, in the fourth book of his Indian History, endeavours to show throughout that Nebuchadnezzar exceeded Hercules in fortitude and greatness of exploits; and positively affirms that he subdued the greatest part of Lybia and Spain. Strabo likewise asserts, that this king, among the Chaldeans, was more celebrated than Hercules, and led his army out of Spain into Thrace and Pontus. But his empire, though of great extent, was yet of no long duration; for it ended in his grandson Belshazzar, not seventy years after the delivery of this prophecy: and this may be the reason of Daniel's speaking of him as the only king, *thou art this head of gold, and after thee shall rise, &c.* Dan. ii. 38, 39.

His breast and his arms of silver, which Daniel thus interprets, *And after thee shall rise another kingdom inferior to thee*. It is very well known (from what has been already said in a former prophecy relative to Babylon) that the kingdom which arose after the Babylonian was the Medo-Persian. The two hands and the shoulders (saith Josephus) signify that the empire of the Babylonians should be dissolved by two kings. The two kings were, the kings of the Medes and Persians, whose powers were united under Cyrus, who besieged and took Babylon, put an end to that empire, and on its ruins erected the Medo-Persian, or the Persian (as it is more usually called) the Persians having soon gained the ascendancy over the Medes.

The Persian empire is said to be *inferior*, as being less than the Babylonian; and it is certain that neither Cyrus, or any of his successors, ever carried their arms into Africa or Spain, at least as far as Nebuchadnezzar is reported to have done. The Persian empire may likewise be called *inferior* as being *worse* than the former, for (as Dean Prideaux justly observes) the kings of Persia were certainly "the worst race of men that ever governed an empire." This empire, from its first establishment by Cyrus, to the death of the last king Darius Codomannus, lasted not much above two hundred years. And thus far it is agreed by all commentators, that the two

first kingdoms represented in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, were the Babylonian and the Persian.

His belly and his thighs of brass, which is interpreted by Daniel, *And another third kingdom of brass which shall bear rule over all the earth*. It is well known that Alexander the Great subverted the Persian empire. The kingdom, therefore, which succeeded to the Persian was the Macedonian; and this kingdom was fitly represented by *brass*, for the Greeks were famous for their brazen armour, their usual epithet being *the brazen-coated Greek*. The third kingdom is also said to *bear rule over all the earth*. Alexander the Great commanded that he should be called *the king of all the world*; not that he really conquered, or nearly conquered the whole world, but he had considerable dominions in Europe, Asia and Africa, that is, in all the three parts of the world then known; and Diodorus Siculus, and other historians, mention ambassadors coming from almost all parts of the world to congratulate Alexander upon his successes, or to submit to his empire.

That this third kingdom, therefore, was the Macedonian there is not the least doubt. St. Jerome saith expressly, "the third kingdom signifies Alexander, and the kingdom of the Macedonians, and of the successors of Alexander. Which is rightly named brazen, saith he: for among all metals brass is most vocal, and tinkles louder, and its sound is diffused far and wide, that it portended not only the fame and power of the kingdom, but also the eloquence of the Greek language." After the death of Alexander the kingdoms of the east were divided among his successors, but the whole still retained the name of the Macedonian empire; and Justin reckons Alexander the same to the Macedonians, as Cyrus was to the Persians, and Romulus to the Romans.

His legs of iron, his feet part of iron, and part of clay. This is interpreted by Daniel as follows: *And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron; forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces, and subdueth all things; and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potter's clay, and part of iron; the kingdom shall be divided, but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay; so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.* Dan. ii. 40, &c.

This fourth kingdom is described as stronger than the three preceding. As iron breaketh and bruisseth all other metals, so this was to break and subdue all the former kingdoms. The metal here is different, and consequently the nation was to be different from the preceding. The four different metals must signify the four different nations: and as the gold signified the Babylonians, the silver the Persians, and the brass the Macedonians, so the iron must necessarily denote some other nation; and that this nation was no other than that of the Romans will evidently appear from what follows.

The

The Romans succeeded next to the Macedonians, and therefore, in course, were next to be mentioned. The Roman empire was stronger and larger than any of the preceding. The Romans brake in pieces, and subdued, all the former kingdoms. Josephus says, that as the two arms of silver denoted the kings of the Medes and Persians, so we might say, in like manner, that the two legs of iron signified the two Roman consuls. The iron was *mixed with miry clay*, and the Romans were defiled with a mixture of barbarous nations. The Roman empire was at length divided into ten lesser kingdoms, answering to the ten toes of the image. These kingdoms retained much of the old Roman strength, and manifested it upon several occasions; so that *the kingdom was partly strong and partly broken*. They mingled themselves with the seed of men. They made marriages and alliances one with another; but no hearty union ensued; reasons of state are stronger than those founded on the ties of blood, and interest will always avail more than affinity.

The Roman empire, therefore, is represented in a double state, first, with the strength of iron, conquering all before it, *his legs of iron*; and then weakened and divided by the mixture of barbarous nations, *his feet part of iron, and part of clay*. It subdued Syria, and made the kingdom of the Seleucidæ a Roman province in the year 65 before Christ; it subdued Egypt, and made the kingdom of the Lagidæ a Roman province in the year 30 before Christ: and in the fourth century after Christ it began to be torn in pieces by the incursions of the barbarous nations.

St. Jerome lived to see the incursions of the barbarous nations: and his comment is, "that the fourth kingdom, which plainly belongs to the Romans, is the iron that breaketh and subdueth all things; but his feet and toes are part of iron, and part of clay, which is most manifestly proved at this time: For as in the beginning nothing was stronger and harder than the Roman empire, so in the end of things nothing is weaker; since both in civil wars, and against divers nations, we want the assistance of other barbarous nations." He hath given the same interpretation in other parts of his works; and it seemeth that he had been blamed for it, as a reflection upon the government; and therefore he maketh this apology for himself; "If (saith he) in explaining the statue and the difference of his feet and toes, I have interpreted the iron and clay of the Roman kingdom, which the scripture foretels should be first strong, and then weak, let them not impute it to me, but to the prophet: for we must not so flatter princes, as to neglect the verity of the holy scriptures, nor is a general disputation an injury to a single person."

All antient writers, both Jewish and Christian, agree with St. Jerome in explaining the fourth king to be the Roman. The celebrated Mr. Mede, who was as able a judge as any person whatever in these matters, has made the following very just observation: "The Roman empire (says he) was believed to be the fourth kingdom of Daniel by the church of Israel

"both before and in Our Saviour's time; received by the disciples of the prophets, and the whole Christian church for the first 300 years, without any known contradiction. And I confess, having so good a ground in scripture, it is with me *little less than an article of faith*."

Exclusive of this wonderful image, Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream a stone cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces: Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver and the gold broken in pieces together, and became like the chaff of the threshing-floors, and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth: Which is thus interpreted and explained by Daniel, *And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever: Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver and the gold*, ver. 44, 45.

By this was evidently meant the kingdom of Christ, which was set up during the days of the last of the before mentioned kingdoms. The stone was totally a very different thing from the image, and the kingdom of Christ is totally different from the kingdoms of the world. The stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and was to be a building of God, an house not made with hands. This the fathers generally apply to Christ himself, who was miraculously born of a virgin without the concurrence of a man: but it should rather be understood of the kingdom of Christ, which was formed out of the Roman empire, not by number of hands, or strength of armies, but without human means, and the assistance of second causes. This kingdom was set up by the God of heaven; and from hence the phrase of *the kingdom of heaven* came to signify the kingdom of the Messiah; and so it was used and understood by the Jews, and so it is applied by Our Saviour in the New Testament. Other kingdoms were raised by human ambition and worldly power: but this was the work not of man but of God; this was truly as it is called *the kingdom of heaven*, and a kingdom not of this world; its laws, its powers, were all Divine. This kingdom was never to be destroyed, as the Babylonian, the Persian, and the Macedonian empires have been, and, in a great measure, also the Roman. This kingdom was to break in pieces and consume all the kingdoms, to spread and enlarge itself, so that it should comprehend within itself all the former kingdoms. It shoud, it was to fill the whole earth, to become universal, and to stand for ever.

As the fourth kingdom, or the Roman empire, was represented in a twofold state, first strong and flourishing with legs of iron, and then weakened and divided with feet and toes part of iron and part of clay; so this fifth kingdom, or the kingdom of Christ, is described likewise in two states, which Mr. Mede very justly distinguishes by the names of *the kingdom*

dom of the stone, and the kingdom of the mountain; the first, when the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands; the second when it became itself a mountain and filled the whole earth. The stone was cut out of the mountain without hands; that is, the kingdom of Christ was first set up while the Roman empire was in its full strength with legs of iron. The Roman empire was afterwards divided into ten lesser kingdoms, the remains of which are still subsisting. The image is still standing upon his feet and toes of iron and clay; the kingdom of Christ is still the stone cut out of the mountain; this stone will one day smite the image upon the feet and toes, and destroy it utterly, and will itself become a great mountain and fill the whole earth; or, in other words, the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever, Rev. xi. 15. We have, therefore, seen the kingdom of the stone, but we have not yet seen the kingdom of the mountain. Some parts of this prophecy still remain to be fulfilled; and from the exact completion of the other parts there is not the least doubt but that the rest, in due season, will be fully accomplished.

This interpretation of the fifth kingdom is consonant to the sense of all antient writers, both Jews and Christians. Jonathan Bell Uzziel, who made the Chaldee Targum, or paraphrase upon the prophecies, lived a little before Our Saviour. He did not, indeed, make any Chaldee version of Daniel, but he applies his prophecies in his interpretation of those of other prophets. Thus, in a paraphrase upon Habakkuk he speaketh of the four great kingdoms of the earth, that they should, in their turns, be destroyed, and be succeeded by the kingdom of the Messiah. "For the kingdom of Babylon shall not continue, nor exercise dominion over Israel; the kings of Media shall be slain, and the strong men of Greece shall not prosper; the Romans shall be blotted out, nor collect tribute from Jerusalem. Therefore because of the sign and redemption which thou shalt accomplish for thy Christ and for the remnant of thy people, they who remain shall praise thee, &c."

Josephus, in speaking of this kingdom, says, "The kingdom of the stone shall bruise the Jews that stumbled at Christ's first coming; but the kingdom of the mountain, when manifested, shall beat the feet of the monarchical statue to dust, and leave no remains of the fourth monarchy in its last and degenerate state."

The same opinion was prevalent among the ancient Christians, as well as among the Jews. St. Jerome, and all the fathers, who have occasion to comment upon this passage, give the same interpretation; but it will be sufficient here to preserve the testimony of that elegant historian Sulpicius Severus, who, after having given an account of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and all the particulars relating to it, subjoins an exposition of it agreeable to Daniel's interpretation. "The image (says he) is an emblem of the world. The golden head is the empire of the Chaldeans; forasmuch as that was the first and most wealthy. The breast and arms

of silver signify the second kingdom, which was that of the Persian under Cyrus. In the brazen belly the third kingdom is declared to be portended; and that we see fulfilled: Forasmuch as the empire taken from the Persians was given by Alexander to Macedonia. The iron legs are the fourth kingdom: and that is the Roman, the strongest of all the kingdoms before it. But the feet part of iron and part of clay, prefigure the Roman empire to be so divided as that it should never unite again: which is equally fulfilled. Forasmuch as the Roman territory is occupied by foreign nations or rebels:—and we see (saith he, and he lived at the beginning of the fifth century) barbarous nations mixed with our armies, cities, and provinces.—But in the stone cut out without hands, which brake in pieces the gold, the silver, the brass, the iron and the clay, we have a figure of Christ: for he shall reduce this world, in which are the kingdoms of the earth, to nothing, and shall establish a kingdom that will last for ever."

Thus did it please God to reveal unto Daniel, and by Daniel unto Nebuchadnezzar, the great and most signal events of this world, as Daniel said unto Nebuchadnezzar at the time he interpreted his dream, *The great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter; and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof is sure*, Dan. ii. 45. The king, hearing his dream related with such exactness, might be better assured of the truth of the interpretation, and of the great events which should follow. And from hence we are enabled, in some measure, to account for Nebuchadnezzar's prophesying a little before he died. Abydenus wrote the history of the Assyrians. It is not well known in what age he lived, and his history is lost; but there is a fragment of it preserved by Eusebius, wherein it is asserted that Nebuchadnezzar, just before his death, was inspired, and that he prophesied in this manner: "I Nebuchadnezzar foretel unto you, O Babylonians, an imminent calamity, which neither Belus my progenitor, nor queen Beltis can persuade the fates to avert: A Persian mule shall come assisted by your demons, and impose servitude upon you; whose coadjutor shall be a Mede, the boast of the Assyrians."

This prophecy of Nebuchadnezzar was afterwards thus interpreted. Cyrus was the mule; he was born of parents of different nations, the mother the better, and the father the meaner; for she was a Mede, and a daughter of the king of the Medes, but he was a Persian, and subject to the Medes. If, therefore, any such prophecy was uttered by Nebuchadnezzar a little before his death, if any such oracle was received and believed of Cyrus and the Persians subduing Asia, it may very justly be supposed to have been derived originally from the prophecy of Daniel, which being solemnly delivered to a great king, and published in Chaldee, might come to be generally known in the east; and the truth of it was soon evinced by the event that followed.

It was likewise from this prophecy of Daniel that the distinction first arose of the four great empires

empires of the world, which hath been followed by most historians and chronologers in their distribution of times. As these four empires are the subject of this prophecy, so likewise have they been the subject of the most celebrated writers both in former and in later ages. The histories of these empires are the best written, and the most read, of any; they are the study of the learned, and the amusement of the polite; they are of use both in schools, and in senates: from hence examples, instructions, laws and politics are derived for all ages; and very little in comparison is known of other times, or of other nations.

It may be observed by some that there have been empires as great as these, such as those of the Tartars, the Saracens and the Turks; and it may, perhaps, be thought that they are as well deserving of a place in this succession of kingdoms, and were equally worthy to be made the objects of prophecy, being as eminent for the wisdom of their constitutions, the extent of their dominions, and the length of their duration. But these four empires had a particular

relation to the church and people of God, who were subject to each of them in their turns. The fate of them was therefore particularly predicted; and we have in them, without the intermixture of others, a line of prophecy (as it may be justly called) from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar to the full and complete establishment of the kingdom of the Messiah.

The great arbiter of kingdoms, and governor of the universe, can reveal as much of their future revolutions as he pleaseth: and he hath revealed enough to manifest his Providence, and to confirm the truth of religion. What Daniel, therefore, said on the first discovery of these things, may be very justly applied after the completion of so many particulars: *Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever; for wisdom and might are his. And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding. He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him,* Dan. ii. 20, &c.

C H A P. XIII.

Of DANIEL'S Vision concerning the four great Empires.

IN the first year of the reign of Belshazzar, (the last sovereign of the Babylonish empire) the same things were revealed unto Daniel concerning the four great empires of the world, as had been revealed unto Nebuchadnezzar in the second year of his reign, which was a space of about forty-eight years. All the difference between these revelations is, that what was revealed to Nebuchadnezzar in the form of a great image was represented to Daniel in the shape of great wild beasts; which difference is accounted for by Mr. Louth, who says, "this image appeared with a glorious lustre in the imagination of Nebuchadnezzar, whose mind was wholly taken up with admiration of worldly pomp and splendor; whereas the same monarchies were represented to Daniel under the shape of fierce and wild beasts, as being the great supporters of idolatry and tyranny in the world."

In Daniel's vision the first kingdom is represented by a beast, that was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: and I beheld till the wings thereof were pluckt, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made to stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it, Dan. vii. 4. This is the kingdom of the Babylonians: and the king of Babylon is, in like manner, compared to a lion by the prophet Jeremiah, *the lion is come up from his thicket, and the destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way,* Jer. iv. 7. and he is said to fly as an eagle, *Behold, he shall fly as an eagle, and shall spread his wings over Moab,* xlviii. 40. And he is also compared to an eagle by the prophet Eze-

kiel, *Thus saith the Lord God, A great eagle with great wings, &c.* Ezek. xvii. 3.

The lion is the king of beasts, and the eagle the king of birds; and therefore the kingdom of Babylon, which is described as the first and noblest kingdom, and was the kingdom then in being, is said to partake of the nature of both. The eagle's wings denote its swiftness and rapidity: and the conquests of Babylon were very rapid, that empire being advanced to its height within a few years by a single person, namely, by the conduct and arms of Nebuchadnezzar. It is farther said that *the wings thereof were pluckt.* Its wings were beginning to be pluckt when Daniel's prophecy was first delivered, for at that time the Medes and Persians were incroaching upon it: Belshazzar, the then reigning king, was the last of his race; and in the seventeenth year of his reign Babylon was taken, and the kingdom was transferred to the Medes and Persians.

And it was made to stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. The meaning of this passage is supposed to be an allusion to the case of Nebuchadnezzar, when, in his madness, a beast's heart was given unto him, and, after he was restored to his senses, a man's heart was given to him again. It evidently appears, that after the Babylonian empire was subverted the people became more humane and gentle; their minds were humbled with their ill fortune; and those who vaunted as if they had been more than men, now found themselves to be but men. They were, in short, brought to such a sense as the psalmist wishes such persons

to have, *Put them in fear, O Lord; that the nations may know themselves to be but men*, Psal. ix. 20.

The second kingdom is represented by *another beast like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh*, Dan. vii. 5. This is the kingdom of the Medes and Persians: and for their cruelty and greediness after blood they are compared to a bear, which is a savage and voracious animal. The learned Bochart recounts several particulars wherein the Persians resembled bears; but the chief likeness consisted in what has been already mentioned; and this likeness was principally intended by the prophet, as evidently appears from the words of the text itself, *Arise, devour much flesh*.

And it raised up itself on one side, or, it raised up one dominion. The Persians were subject to the Medes at the conquest of Babylon, but soon after raised themselves above them.

And it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it. By these are meant the three kingdoms of the Babylonians, Medes and Persians, which were reduced into one kingdom. They might properly be called *ribs*, as the conquest of them much strengthened the Persian empire; and they might be said to be between the teeth of the bear, as they were much grinded and oppressed by the Persians.

And they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. This, as we have before observed, was said, to denote the natural cruelty of the Medes and Persians. They are also represented very cruel by the prophet Isaiah, chap. xiii. 18. *Cambyses, Ochus, and others of their princes, were, indeed, more like bears than men*. Instances of their cruelty abound in almost all the historians who have written of their affairs. Ammianus Marcellinus describes them as being proud, cruel, and exercising the power of life and death over slaves and obscure plebeians. "They pull off the skin (says he) from men alive by pieces or altogether; and they have abominable laws, by which, for one man's offence, all the neighbourhood is destroyed."

The third kingdom is represented by *another beast like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it*. This is the kingdom of the Macedonians or Grecians, who, under the command of Alexander the Great, overcame the Persians, and reigned next after them: and it is fitly compared to a leopard on several accounts. The leopard is remarkable for swiftness; and Alexander and the Macedonians were amazingly swift and rapid in their conquests. The leopard is a spotted animal; and was therefore a proper emblem (according to Bochart) of the different manners of the nations which Alexander commanded, or (according to Grotius) of the various manners of Alexander himself, who was sometimes merciful, and sometimes cruel; sometimes temperate, and sometimes drunken; sometimes abstemious, and sometimes incontinent. The leopard (as Bochart observes) is of small stature, but of great courage, so as not to be afraid to engage with the lion and the largest beasts; and so Alexander, a

little king in comparison, of small stature too, and with a small army, dared to attack Darius, whose kingdom was extended from the Aegean Sea to the Indies.

The beast had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl. The Babylonian empire was represented with two wings, but this is described with four. For (as St. Jerome saith) nothing could be swifter than the victories of Alexander, who ran through all the countries, from Illyricum and the Adriatic Sea, to the Indian ocean and the river Ganges, not so much fighting as conquering, and in twelve years subjugated part of Europe, and all Asia to himself.

The beast had also four heads; to denote the four kingdoms into which this same third kingdom should be divided, as it was divided, after the death of Alexander, into four kingdoms, Cassander reigning over Macedon and Greece, Lysimachus over Thrace and Bithynia, Ptolemy over Egypt, and Seleucus over Syria.

And dominion was given to it. This (as St. Jerome says) sheweth, that it was not owing to the fortitude of Alexander, but proceeded from the will of the Lord. And, indeed, unless he had been directed, preserved, and assisted by the supreme power, how could Alexander with 30,000 men have overcome Darius with 600,000, and, in so short a time, have brought all the countries, from Greece as far as to India, into subjection?

The fourth kingdom is represented by a *fourth beast, dreadful and terrible; and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured, and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it, and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it*. Daniel was particularly desirous to know what this might mean; upon which he was thus answered by the angel, who had explained to him the former part of his vision: *The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon the earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces*, Daniel vii. 19-23.

This fourth kingdom can be none other than the Roman empire. The fourth beast was so great and horrible, that it was not easy to find an adequate name for it: and the Roman empire was dreadful, and terrible, and strong exceedingly, beyond any of the former kingdoms. It was diverse from all kingdoms, not only in its republican form of government, but likewise in strength and power, and greatness, length of duration, and extent of dominion. *It devoured, and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it*. It reduced Macedon into a Roman province about 168 years, the kingdom of Pergamus about 133 years, Syria about 65 years, and Egypt about 30 years, before Christ. And besides the remains of the Macedonian empire, it subdued many other provinces and kingdoms; so that it might very justly be said to *devour the whole earth, and to tread it down, and break it in pieces*; and it became, in a manner, what the Roman writers delighted to call it, namely, *the empire of the whole world*.

A celebrated Greek writer, who flourished in the reign of Augustus Cæsar, hath a remarkable passage, which is very pertinent towards illustrating

illustrating the fulfilment of this part of the prophecy. In speaking of the great superiority of the Roman to all former empires, he saith, "The Macedonian empire having overturned the force of the Persians, in greatness indeed of dominion exceeded all the kingdoms which were before it: but yet it did not flourish a long time. After the death of Alexander it began to grow worse and worse, and being divided into several principalities by his successors, it was weakened by itself, and at last was destroyed by the Romans. Notwithstanding its once great power, yet it did not reduce all the earth and sea to its obedience. For neither did it possess Africa, except that part adjoining to Egypt; neither did it subdue all Europe, but only northwards it proceeded as far as Thrace, and westwards it descended to the Adriatic Sea. But the city of Rome ruleth over all the earth, as far as it is inhabited; and commands all the sea, not only that within the pillars of Hercules, but also the ocean, as far as it is navigable, having first and alone of all the most celebrated kingdoms, made the east and west the bounds of its empire: and its dominion hath continued not a short time, but longer than that of any other city or kingdom in the world."

Another remarkable property of this fourth beast is, that *it had ten horns*: and, according to the angel's interpretation, *the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings, or kingdoms, that shall arise*; which was accordingly fulfilled when the Roman empire was divided into ten different states or kingdoms.

But besides these ten horns or kingdoms of the fourth empire, there was to spring up among them another little horn. *I considered the horns (saith Daniel) and behold there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns pluckt up by the roots.* Daniel was eager to know the meaning of this part of the vision; upon which the angel informed him, that as *the ten horns out of this kingdom were ten kings, or kingdoms, that should arise*, so likewise that *another shall rise after them, and he shall subdue three kings, or kingdoms.*

We have already seen that the Roman empire was divided into ten horns or kingdoms; and among them we may, on a proper examination, find another little horn or kingdom, answering in all respects to the character here given. The celebrated Machiavel (in his history of Florence) after having shewn how the Roman empire was broken and divided by the incursions of the northern nations, says, "About this time the bishops of Rome began to take upon them, and to exercise greater authority than they had formerly done. At first the successors of St. Peter were venerable and eminent for their miracles, and the holiness of their lives; and their examples added daily such numbers to the Christian church, that to obviate or remove the confusions which were then in the world, many princes turned Christians, and the emperor of Rome being converted among the rest, and quitting Rome, to hold his residence at Constantinople, the Roman empire began to decline, but the church of Rome augmented as fast." He then proceeds to

give an account how the Roman empire declined, and the power of the church of Rome increased, first under the Goths, then under the Lombards; and afterwards by the calling in of the Franks.

Here, then, is a little horn springing up among the other ten horns. The bishop of Rome was respectable as a bishop long before, but he did not become a *horn* properly (which is an emblem of strength and power) till he became a temporal prince. He was to *rise after* the other, that is, *behind them*; so that the ten kings were not aware of the growing up of the little horn, till it had overpowered them. *Three of the first horns* (that is, three of the first kings or kingdoms) *were to be pluckt up by the roots, and to fall before him.* These three are very fully explained both by Mr. Mede and Sir Isaac Newton; but, as there is very little variation between them, we shall only quote the words of the latter. "Kings (saith he) are put for kingdoms, and therefore the little horn is a little kingdom. It was a horn of the fourth beast, and rooted up three of his first horns, and therefore we are to look for it among the nations of the Latin empire, after the rise of the ten horns.—In the eighth century, by rooting up and subduing the exarchate of Ravenna, the kingdom of the Lombards, and the senate and dukedom of Rome, the bishop acquired Peter's patrimony out of their dominions; and thereby rose up as a temporal prince or king, or horn of the fourth beast." Again. "It was certainly by the victory of the see of Rome over the Greek emperor, the king of Lombardy, and the senate of Rome, that she acquired Peter's patrimony, and rose up to her greatness."—That this explanation of Sir Isaac Newton's is justly founded will appear from what follows.

First, the exarchate of Ravenna, which of right belonged to the Greek emperors, and was the capital of their dominions in Italy, having revolted at the instigation of the pope, was unjustly seized by Aistulphus king of the Lombards, who thereupon thought of making himself master of Italy. The pope, in this exigency, applied for help to Pipin king of France, who marched into Italy, besieged the Lombards in Pavia, and forced them to surrender the exarchate and other territories, which were not restored to the Greek emperor as in justice they ought to have been, but, at the solicitation of the pope, were given to St. Peter and his successors for a perpetual succession. Pope Zachary had acknowledged Pipin usurper of the crown of France, as lawful sovereign; and now Pipin in his turn bestowed a principality, which was another's properly, upon Pope Stephen II. the successor of Zachary. "And so, as Platina says, the name of the exarchate, which had continued from the time of Narfes to the taking of Ravenna by Aistulphus an hundred and seventy years, was extinguished." This (according to Sigonius) was effected in the year 755; and henceforward the popes, having become temporal princes, did no longer date their epistles and bulls by the years of the emperors reign, but by the years of their own advancement to the papal chair.

Secondly, the kingdom of the Lombards was often

often troublesome to the pope. King Disiderius invaded the territories of pope Adrian I. upon which the latter was obliged to have recourse to the king of France, and earnestly invited Charles the Great, the son and successor of Pipin, to come into Italy to his assistance. He accordingly went with a great army (being ambitious also himself of enlarging his dominions in Italy) and conquered the Lombards, put an end to their kingdom, and gave great part of their dominions to the pope. He not only confirmed the former donations of his father Pipin, but also made an addition of other countries to them, as Corsica, Sardinia, the Sabin territories, the whole track between Lucca and Parma, and that part of Tuscany which belonged to the Lombards: and the tables of these donations he not only signed himself, but caused them to be signed by the bishops, abbots, and other great men then present, and laid them so signed upon the altar of St. Peter. And this was the end of the kingdom of the Lombards, in the 206th year after their possessing Italy, and in the year of Christ 774.

Thirdly, the *state of Rome*, though subject to the popes in things spiritual, was yet, in things temporal, governed by the senate and people, who, after their defection from the eastern emperors, still retained many of their old privileges, and elected both the western emperor and the popes. After Charles the Great had overthrown the kingdom of the Lombards, he went again to Rome, and was there by the pope, bishops, abbots, and people of Rome, chosen Roman patrician, which is the degree of honor and power next to emperor. He then settled the affairs of Italy, and permitted the pope to hold under him the duchy of Rome with other territories: but after a few years, the Romans, desirous to recover their liberty, conspired against pope Leo III. accused him of many great crimes, and imprisoned him. His accusers were heard on a day appointed before Charles and a council of French and Italian bishops: but the pope, without pleading his own cause or making any defence, was acquitted, his accusers were slain or banished, and he himself was declared superior to all human judicature. And thus the foundation was laid for the absolute authority of the pope over the Romans, which was completed by degrees; and Charles in return was chosen emperor of the west. However, after the death of Charles the Great, the Romans again conspired against the pope; but Lewis the Pious, the son and successor of Charles, acquitted him again. Some time after this pope Leo was taken dangerously ill, which as soon as the Romans, his enemies knew, they rose again, plundered and burnt his villas, and thence marched to Rome to recover what things they complained had been taken from them by force; but they were repressed by some of the emperor's troops. The same emperor Lewis the Pious, at the request of pope Paschal, confirmed the donations which his father and grandfather had made to the see of Rome. Sigonius has recited the confirmation; and therein are mentioned Rome and its duchy containing part of Tuscany and Campania, Ravenna with the exarchate and Pentapolis, and the other part of Tuscany and the coun-

tries taken from the Lombards: and all these are granted to the pope and his successors, that they should hold them in their own right, principality and dominions to the end of the world.

These were *the three horns, three of the first horns*, which fell before the little horn: and the pope hath, in a manner, pointed himself out for the person by wearing the *triple crown*. In other respects too the pope fully answers the character of the little horn; so that if exquisite fitness of application may assure us of the true sense of the prophecy, we can no longer doubt concerning the person. He is *a little horn*: And the power of the popes was originally very small, and their temporal dominions were little and inconsiderable in comparison with others of the ten horns.

He shall be diverse from the first: that is, his kingdom shall be of a different nature and constitution: and the power of the pope differs greatly from that of all other princes, he having not only an ecclesiastical, but likewise a civil and temporal authority.

And behold in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man. This denotes his cunning and foresight, his looking out and watching all opportunities to promote his own interests: And the policy of the Roman hierarchy hath almost passed into a proverb.

He had a mouth speaking very great things. And who hath been more noisy and blustering than the pope, especially in former ages, boasting of his supremacy, thundering out his bulls and anathemas, excommunicating princes, and absolving subjects from their allegiance?

His look was more stout than his fellows. And the pope assumes a superiority not only over his fellow bishops, but even over crowned heads, and requires greater honours to be paid to him than are expected even by kings and emperors themselves.

And he shall speak great words against the Most High; or, he shall speak great words as the Most High. And has he not set himself up above all laws divine and human, arrogating to himself godlike attributes and titles of *holiness* and *infallibility*, exacting obedience to his ordinances and decrees in preference to, and in open violation of, both reason and scripture?

And he shall wear out the saints of the Most High. This he has done by wars, massacres and inquisitions, persecuting and destroying the faithful servants of Christ, and the true worshippers of God, who have protested against his innovations, and refused to comply with the idolatry practised in the church of Rome.

And he shall think to change times and laws. This he has done by appointing fasts and feasts, canonizing saints, granting pardons and indulgencies for sins, instituting new modes of worship, imposing new articles of faith, enjoining new rules of practice, and, in short, reverting at pleasure the laws both of God and men.

Such is the power of the pope even at the present period, and such is the little horn that was to arise out of the ten horns, or kingdoms, into which the Roman empire was divided.

But the four kingdoms represented in Daniel's vision were to be followed by a fifth, namely, the

the kingdom of the Messiah. *I beheld, saith Daniel, till the thrones were cast down, and the antient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him: and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened, Dan. vii. 9, 10.* These metaphors and figures are taken from the solemnities of earthly judicatories, and particularly of the great Sanhedrim of the Jews, where the father of the consistory sat, with his assessors seated on each side of him in the form of a semicircle, and the people standing before him: and from this was taken the description of the day of judgment as given in the New Testament.

I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spoke; I beheld, even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame, ver. 11. The beast will be destroyed because of the great words which the horn spoke, and the destruction of the beast will also be the destruction of the horn; and consequently the horn is a part of the fourth beast, or of the Roman empire. *As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.* When the dominion was taken away from the other beasts, their bodies were not destroyed, they were suffered to continue still in being: but when the dominion shall be taken away from the fourth beast, his body shall be totally destroyed; the other kingdoms succeeded each other, but none other earthly kingdom shall succeed to this.

I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the antient of days, and they brought him near before him. Here was evidently displayed the coming of the Messiah. From hence the son of man came to be a known term for the Messiah among the Jews. From hence it was taken and used so frequently in the gospel; and Our Saviour intimates himself to be this very son of man: *Hereafter (says he) shall ye see the son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven, Matth. xxvi. 64, 65.* And for saying this he was charged by the high-priest with having spoken blasphemy.

And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, Dan. vii. 14. All these kingdoms shall, in time, be destroyed, but the kingdom of the Messiah shall stand for ever: and it was in allusion to this part of the prophecy that the angel said of Christ, before he was born, *He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end, Luke i. 33.*

In what manner these great changes will be effected, we cannot pretend to say, as God hath not been pleased to reveal it unto us. We see, however, the remains of the ten horns which arose out of the Roman empire. We see the little horn still subsisting, but, it is to be hoped,

on the decline, and tending towards a dissolution. And having seen so many of these particulars accomplished, we can have no reason to doubt but that the rest also will, in due season, be amply fulfilled.

If we compare the prophecies of Daniel in interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream, with those revealed to Daniel in his vision, and interpreted by the angel, we shall find such a close similarity as must naturally strike us with astonishment. What was represented to Nebuchadnezzar in the form of a great image was represented again to Daniel by four great wild beasts: and the beasts have degenerated as the metals grew worse and worse.

This image's head was of fine gold, and the first beast was like a lion with eagle's wings; and these answer to each other; and both represented the powers then reigning, or the kingdom of the Babylonians: but it appeared in splendor and glory to Nebuchadnezzar, as it was then in its flourishing condition; the plucking of its wings, and its humiliation were shown to Daniel, as it was then drawing near to its fatal end.

The breast and arms of silver, and the second beast like a bear were designed to represent the second kingdom, or that of the Medes and Persians. The two arms are supposed to denote the two people; but some farther particulars were hinted to Daniel, of the one people rising up above the other people, and of the conquest of three additional kingdoms. To Nebuchadnezzar this kingdom was called inferior, or worse than the former; and to Daniel it was described as very cruel, *Arise, devour much flesh.*

The third kingdom, or that of the Macedonians, was represented by *the belly and thighs of brass, and by the third beast like a leopard with four wings of a fowl.* It was said to Nebuchadnezzar, that it should bear rule over all the earth, and in Daniel's vision dominion was given to it. The four heads signify Alexander's four successors; but the two thighs can only signify the two principal of them, namely, the Seleucidæ and Lagidæ, that is, the Syrian and Egyptian kings.

The legs of iron, and the fourth beast with great iron teeth exactly correspond; and as iron breaketh in pieces all other metals, so the fourth beast devoured and break in pieces; and they were, therefore, both equally proper representatives of the fourth kingdom, or the Roman, which was stronger and more powerful than either of the former kingdoms. The ten toes too, and the ten horns were alike fit emblems of the ten kingdoms, which arose out of the division of the Roman empire: but all that relates to the little horn was revealed only to Daniel, as a person more immediately interested in the fate of the church.

The stone, that was cut out of the mountain without hands, and became itself a mountain and filled the whole earth, is explained to be a kingdom, which shall prevail over all other kingdoms, and become universal and everlasting. In like manner, *one like the son of man came to the antient of days, and was advanced to a kingdom, which shall prevail likewise over all other kingdoms, and become universal and everlasting.*

Such is the great concord and agreement between these prophecies of Daniel, which, remarkable

markable as they are in many things, are not more so, than that they comprehend such distant events, and extend through so many ages, from the reign of the Babylonians, to the consummation of all things. They are truly (as Mr. Mede calls them) "the sacred calendar and great almanac of prophecy, a prophetic chronology of times measured by the succession of four principal kingdoms, from the beginning of the captivity of Israel, until the mystery of God shall be finished."

Daniel was much troubled, and his countenance changed in him at the foresight of the calamities that were to be brought on the church by the little horn: but he kept the matter in his heart.

Much more may good men be grieved at the sight of these calamities, and lament the prevalence of popery and wickedness in the world: but let them keep it in their hearts, that a time of just retribution will certainly come. The proof of this may be drawn from the moral attributes of God, as well as from his promise: *The judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominion shall serve and obey him,* Daniel vii. 26, 27.

C H A P. XIV.

DANIEL'S Vision of the RAM and HE-GOAT.

THE first vision Daniel had was that of the four great beasts, representing the four great empires of the world, and which happened in the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon. In the third year of the same king's reign he had another vision, which, though in form of a different nature, pertained, in a very great degree, to the same tendency. *In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar, a vision appeared unto me, even unto me, Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first.* It was exhibited to him in the palace of Shushan, and by the side of the river Ulai, or Euleus, as it is called by the Greeks and Romans. *And I saw in a vision, and it came to pass when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of E-lam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river Ulai.* Such was the time and place of the vision; and the vision itself consisted of a ram and an he-goat.

In the former vision there appeared four beasts, because four empires were there represented; but here are only two, because here we have a representation of what was transacted chiefly within two empires. The first of the four empires (that is, the Babylonian) is here wholly omitted, for its fate, at this time, was sufficiently known, and it was now drawing very near to a conclusion. The second empire, therefore, in the former vision, is the first in this; and what was there compared to a bear, is here prefigured by a ram. *Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns, and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last,* Dan viii. 3. This ram with two horns, according to the explication of the angel Gabriel, was the empire of the Medes and Persians. *The ram which thou sawest having two horns, are the kings (or kingdoms) of Media and Persia,* ver. 20.

This empire, therefore, which was formed by the conjunction of the Medes and Persians, and is often called the Medo-Persian, was not unfitly represented by a ram with two horns. Cyrus, the founder of this empire, succeeded to both crowns, and united the kingdoms of Media and Persia. It was a coalition of two very formidable powers, and therefore it is said, that *the two horns were high: but one, it is added, was higher than the other, and the higher came up last.* The kingdom of Media was the more antient of the two, and more famous in history. Persia was of little note or account till the time of Cyrus; but under him the Persians gained and preserved the ascendancy.

The great exploits of the ram are afterwards recapitulated by the prophet, who says, *I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward, so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand, but he did according to his will, and became great,* Dan. viii. 4. Under Cyrus himself the Persians pushed their conquests westward as far as the Ægean Sea and the bounds of Asia: northward they subdued the Armenians, Cappadocians, and various other nations: and southward they conquered Egypt, if not under Cyrus, yet most certainly under his son Cambyses. In the prophecy there is not any mention made of their conquests in the east, the reason of which is, that these countries lay very remote, and were of little concern or consequence to them.

The ram was strong and powerful, so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; that is, none of the neighbouring kingdoms were able to contend with the Persians, but all fell under their dominion. *He did according to his will, and became great: and the Persian empire was increased and enlarged to such a degree, that it* extended

extended from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces, Esther i. 1. So that seven provinces were added to the hundred and twenty which it contained in the time of Cyrus, Dan. vi. 1.

After the Ram appears the He-Goat. *And as I was considering, saith Daniel, behold, an he-goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes; which is thus interpreted by the angel Gabriel: The rough goat is the king of Grecia, and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king, or kingdom. A goat is very properly made the type of the Grecian or Macedonian empire, because the Macedonians at first, about two hundred years before Daniel, were denominated *Ægeadæ*, or the goat's people; and the reason of their being so called is thus accounted for by heathen authors. Caranus, their first king, going with a great multitude of Greeks to seek new habitations in Macedonia, was commanded by the oracle to take the goats for his guides to empire: and afterwards seeing a herd of goats flying from a violent storm, he followed them to Edessa, and there fixed the seat of his empire, made the goats his ensign, or standards, and called the city *Ægeæ*, or the goat's town, and the people *Ægeadæ*, or the goat's people. To this it may be added, that the city *Ægeæ* was the usual burial-place of the Macedonian kings, and it is also very remarkable, that Alexander's son by Roxana was named Alexander *Ægeus*, or the son of the goat; and some of Alexander's successors are represented in their coins with goat's horns.*

This he-goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth; that is, he carried every thing before him in all the three parts of the then known world. *And he touched not the ground:* his marches were so swift, and his conquests so rapid, that he might be said, in a manner, to pass over the ground without touching it. For the same reason the same empire in the former vision was likened to a leopard, which is a very swift and active animal; and, to denote the greater quickness and impetuosity, to a leopard with four wings.

And the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. This horn, saith the angel, is the first king, or kingdom of the Greeks in Asia, which was erected by Alexander the Great, and continued for some years under his brother Philip Aridæus, and his two sons Alexander *Ægeus* and Hercules. Dean Prideaux, in speaking of the swiftness of Alexander's marches, hath a passage which is very pertinent to our present purpose. "He flew (says he) with victory swifter than others can travel, often with his horse pursuing his enemies upon the spur whole days and nights, and sometimes making long marches for several days one after the other, as once he did in pursuit of Darius, going near forty miles a day for eleven days together. So that by the speed of his marches he came upon the enemy before they were aware of him, and conquered them before they could be in a posture to resist him. This exactly agreeth with the description given of him in the prophecies of Daniel some ages before, he being

" in them set forth under the similitude of a panther or leopard with four wings: for he was impetuous and fierce in his warlike expeditions, as a panther after his prey, and came on upon his enemies with that speed as if he flew with a double pair of wings. And to this purpose he is, in another part of those prophecies, compared to an he-goat coming from the west with that swiftness upon the king of Media and Persia, that he seemed as if his feet did not touch the ground. And his actions, as well in this comparison as the former, fully verified the prophecy."

In the next part of this vision we have an account of the Persian empire being overthrown by the Grecians. *And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power. And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns, and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him; and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand, Dan. viii. 6, 7.*

The ram had before pushed westward, and the Persians, in the reigns of Darius Hystaspis and Xerxes, had poured down with great armies into Greece: but now the Grecians, in return, carried their arms into Asia, and the he-goat invaded the ram that had invaded him.

And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power. These words strongly point to our imagination the army of Darius standing and guarding the river Granicus, and that of Alexander's on the other side plunging in, swimming across the stream, and rushing on the enemy with all the fire and fury that can be conceived. It appeared to be a strange mad attempt of Alexander to attack the army of Darius, which was considerably more than five times the number of his own: but he was successful in the undertaking, and this success diffused a terror of his name, and opened his way to the conquest of Asia.

And I saw him come close unto the ram. He had several close engagements, or set battles, with the king of Persia, and particularly at the river Granicus in Phrygia, at the Straits of Issus in Cilicia, and in the plains of Arbela in Assyria.

And he was moved with choler against him. That was for the cruelties which the Persians had exercised towards the Grecians; and for Darius's attempting to corrupt sometimes the soldiers of Alexander to betray him, and sometimes his friends to destroy him; so that he would not listen to the most advantageous offers of peace, but he determined to pursue the Persian king, till he sought his destruction.

And he smote the ram, and brake his two horns. He subdued Persia and Media, with the other provinces and kingdoms of the Persian empire; and it is remarkable that in Persia he barbarously sacked and burned the royal city of Persepolis, the capital of the empire; and in Media Darius was seized and made a prisoner by some of his own traitor-subjects, who not long afterwards basely murdered him.

And

And there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him. He conquered wherever he went, routed all the forces, took all the cities and castles, and entirely subverted and ruined the Persian empire.

And there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand. Not even the numerous armies of the king of Persia could defend him; though his forces at the battle of Issus amounted to 600,000 men, and at that of Arbela to 10 or 11,00,000, whereas the whole number of Alexander's was not more than 40,000 in either battle. So true is the observation of the psalmist, there is no king saved by the multitude of an host, Psal. xxxiii. 16. And especially when God hath decreed the fall of empires, then even the greatest must fall. The fortune of Alexander was totally directed by Divine Providence.

There is not any thing fixed and stable in human affairs; and the empire of the goat, though exceeding great, was, perhaps, for that reason, the sooner broken in pieces. *Therefore the he-goat waxed very great, and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones, towards the four winds of heaven. Which the angel thus interprets: Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power, Dan. viii. 22.*

The empire of the goat was in its full strength when Alexander died at Babylon. He was succeeded on the throne by his natural brother Philip Aridæus, and by his own two sons Alexander Ægus and Hercules: but in the space of about fifteen years they were all murdered, and then the first horn, or kingdom, was entirely broken. The royal family being thus extinct, the governors of provinces, who had usurped the power, assumed the title of kings: and by the defeat and death of Antigonus, they were reduced to four, namely, Cassander, Lyfimachus, Ptolemy and Seleucus, who parted Alexander's dominions between them, and divided and settled them into four kingdoms. These four kingdoms are the *notable horns*, which came up in the room of the first great horn; and are the same as the *four heads of the leopard* in the former vision.

Four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power: they were to be kingdoms of Greeks, not of Alexander's own family, but only of his nation; and neither were they to be equal to him in power and dominion, as an empire united is certainly more powerful than an empire divided, and the whole is greater than any of the parts. They were likewise to extend *toward the four winds of heaven*: and in the partition of the empire, Cassander held Macedon, and Greece, and the *western* parts; Lyfimachus had Thrace, Bithynia, and the *northern* regions; Ptolemy possessed Egypt, and the *southern* countries; and Seleucus obtained Syria, and the *eastern* provinces. Thus were they divided *toward the four winds of heaven*.

As in the former vision a little horn sprang up among the ten horns of the Roman empire, so here a little horn is described as rising among the four horns of the Grecian empire. *And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land, Dan. viii. 9.*

This little horn can only be applied to the Romans, who were a new and different power, who rose from small beginnings to an exceeding great empire, who first subdued Macedon and Greece, the capital kingdoms of the goat, and from thence spread and enlarged their conquests over the rest. When they first got footing in Greece, then they became a horn of the goat. Out of this horn they came, and were at first a little horn, but in process of time they overtopped the other horns, and became predominant. The strength of the other kingdoms consisted in themselves, and had its foundation in some part of the goat; but the Roman empire, as a horn, or kingdom of the goat, was not mighty by its own power, was not strong by virtue of the goat, but drew its nourishment and strength from Rome to Italy. There grew the trunk and body of the tree, though the branches extended over Greece, Asia, Syria and Egypt.

The remainder of this prophecy chiefly relates to the persecution and oppressing the people of God. *And he waxed great even to the host of heaven (or against the host of heaven) and he cast down some of the host, and of stars to the ground, and stamped upon them:* that is, the Jewish state in general, or the priests and Levites in particular, who are called *stars*, from their being eminent for their station, and illustrious for their knowledge; and *the host of heaven*, as they watched and served in the temple, and their service is denominated *a warfare*, Numb. viii. 24.

He shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people; and through his policy he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand. When the city of Jerusalem was besieged and taken by the Romans, the number of captives amounted to ninety-seven thousand, and of the slain to eleven hundred thousand. The Romans too carried their conquest and revenge so far as to put an end to the government of the Jews, and entirely to take away their place and nation.

It is farther added, that *he shall also stand up against the prince of princes.* By the *prince of princes* is undoubtedly meant the Messiah. It was by the malice of the Jews, and the authority of the Romans, that he was put to death; and he suffered the punishment of the Roman malefactors and slaves. The Romans not only crucified Our Saviour, but also persecuted his disciples for above three centuries: and when at length they embraced the Christian religion, they soon corrupted it; so that it may be questioned whether their favour was not as hurtful to the church as their enmity. As the power of the Roman emperors declined, that of the Roman pontiffs increased: and may it not with equal truth and justice be said of the latter, as of the former, that they *cast down the truth to the ground, and practised, and prospered?* The persecuting power of Rome, whether exercised towards the Jews, or towards the christians, or by the emperors or popes, is still *the little horn*. The tyranny is the same; but exerted in Greece and the east it is the little horn of the he-goat, or third empire; as exerted in Italy and the west, it is the little horn of the fourth beast, or fourth empire.

But the little horn, like other tyrannical powers,

powers, was to come to a remarkable end: *be shall be broken without hand.* As the stone in Nebuchadnezzar's dream was cut out of the mountain without hands, that is, not by human, but by supernatural means; so the little horn shall be broken without hand, that is, not fall by the hands of man, but perish by a stroke from heaven. And this agrees perfectly with the former predictions of the fatal catastrophe of the Romans. *The stone* (that is, the power of Christ) *smote the image upon his feet of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces,* Dan. ii. 34. *I beheld then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake; I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame,* Dan. vii. 11. And again, *the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume, and to destroy it unto the end,* ver. 26. All which implies that the dominion of the Romans shall finally be destroyed with some extraordinary manifestations of the Divine power.

Daniel was much affected with the misfortunes and afflictions which were to befall the church and people of God. *And I Daniel fainted and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business, and was astonished at the vision, but none understood it,* Dan. viii. 27. That Daniel was thus affected can only be ascribed to his foreseeing that the future distress and misery of the Jews would greatly exceed all they had before sustained. And indeed the calamities which they suffered under the Romans were much greater than the evils brought on them by Nebuchadnezzar. But they expect, and we expect, that at length *the sanctuary will be cleansed, and that God's promise will, in time, be fully accomplished. I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I*

will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things, Acts xv. 16, 17.

This concern of Daniel, and affection for his religion and country, shew him in a very amiable light, and give an additional lustre to his character. But not only in this instance, but in every other, he manifests the same public spirit, and appears no less eminently a patriot than a prophet. Though he was torn early from his country, and enjoyed all the advantages that he could enjoy from foreign service, yet there was not any thing that could make him forget his native home: and in the next chapter (chap. ix.) we see him pouring out his soul in prayer, and most earnestly and devoutly supplicating for the pardon and restoration of his captive nation.

It is, therefore, a gross mistake to think that religion will ever extinguish or abate our love for our own country. The scriptures will rather excite and encourage it, exhibit several illustrious examples of it, and recommend and enforce this, as well as all other moral and social virtues; and especially when the interests of true religion and of our country are so blended and interwoven, that they cannot well be separated the one from the other. This is a double incentive to the love of our country; and with the same zeal that every pious Jew might say formerly, every honest Christian may say now, with the royal psalmist: *O pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and plenteousness within thy palaces. For my brethren and companion's sake I will wish thee prosperity: Yea, because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek to do thee good,* Psal. cxxii. 6, &c.

C H A P. XV.

Of the JEWISH RITUAL, or CEREMONIAL LAW.

IN the preceding chapters of this book we have given an ample account of the respective prophecies contained in the Old Testament, the greater part of which have been already fulfilled, some are still fulfilling, and, no doubt, the rest will be fulfilled when the appointed time shall arrive. In this chapter we shall take some notice of the religious laws and ceremonies of the Jews, as also the means whereby they became acquainted with learning and literature.

The constitution of the Mosaic law consisted of three parts; namely,

1. Of Political and Judicial laws.
2. Of Moral Precepts, such as the Ten Commandments.
3. Of Rites and Ceremonies, such as Circumcision, Sacrifices, Washings, Purifications, the use of certain garments, &c. and divers Rites by the priests in the tabernacle.

We shall observe in general, that the design of these ceremonies was, to convey religious and moral instructions to the people; and the method of their receiving these instructions was, in many instances, by Hieroglyphics. Thus the government of the world by Divine Providence, and his extraordinary interposition in favour of good men, is represented by a ladder standing on the earth, and reaching to heaven, with the angels ascending and descending on it, to receive and execute orders from God above, who ruleth over all. Gen. xxviii. 12, 13. In the stile of this hieroglyphic Our Lord himself speaks, *Hereafter shall ye see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the son of man,* John i. 51.

The exaltation of Joseph above the rest of his family, was represented by the hieroglyphic of his sheaf standing upright, and the eleven sheaves

of his brethren standing round about, and bowing to it. As also of the Sun, and Moon, and eleven Stars, making obedience to him, Gen. xxxvii. 7, 9.

The tribe of *Judah* is represented by a young lion; *Issachar*, by a strong ass; *Dan*, by a serpent lurking in the road; *Naphtali*, by a hind; *Joseph*, by a frightful bough; *Benjamin*, by a ravening wolf; Gen. xlix. 9, 14, &c.

A rod or staff, as it is an instrument of striking or beating down, is the hieroglyphic of power exerted in conquering, punishing and ruling, Isa. x. 5, 24. With such a rod *Moses* and *Aaron* appeared before *Pharaoh*, as hieroglyphically representing the power and authority of God, in whose name they demanded the release of the *Israelites*, Exod. vii. 15. Thus they appeared as men of learning, and acted agreeable to the literature of the age in which they lived.

A horn represented temporal power and dominion, 1 Sam. ii. 10. Psalm lxxix. 24.

A yoke, such as slaves carried upon their shoulders, represented servitude or bondage. Gen. xxvii. 37. 40.

This may serve to explain the nature of hieroglyphics, a sort of language to which the Jews were accustomed; being the learning of that age, which they could understand much better than abstract reasonings, about moral truths and duties.

We may therefore, on this account, well admit, that the rites and ceremonies of their religious institutions were hieroglyphic, and intended, by external representations, to give them useful instructions in true religion and real goodness.

If we consult the prophets and apostles, who were well acquainted with their meaning, we shall find so much evidence of the moral and spiritual intention of so many, as may induce us to believe this was the sense and spirit of all the rest.

The Jews were enjoined frequent and various ablutions, or washings with water; the common use of which is to discharge the body from all dirt and filth, and to keep it clean. This was a very easy representation of purity of mind, or of

an heart purged from filth and sin. In this manner the prophets understood it, *Wash me from mine Iniquity*, Psal. li. 2. *Wash me, and I shall be clean*, ver. 7. *Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings*, Isaiah i. 6.

Anointing with oil, or ointment, by which the head was beautified, and the countenance exhilarated; had the signification of honour, joy, holiness, and inspiration, Psal. xlv. Acts x. 38. The priests officiated in garments of fine linen, Exod. xxxix. 27. meaning, that the priests should be clothed, or have their minds adorned with righteousness.

Burning of incense, whose smoke riseth up with a pleasant scent, was an hieroglyphic representation of acceptable prayer, Psal. cxli. 2. Luke i. 10.

Circumcision had relation to the heart and soul, or to the retrenching all inordinate affections and inclinations, Lev. xxvi. 41. Rom. ii. 29.

The sprinkling of blood, and of the water of separation (Numb. xix. 13, 19.) was hieroglyphic and had a moral signification, See Heb. ix. 13, 14. 1 Pet. i. 2. As had likewise the muzzled mouth of the ox, Deut. xxv. 4. compared with 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10. 1 Tim. v. 17. 18.

Some persons have indulged their fancies more than they ought, and pretended to have found more mysteries in the Hebrew ritual, than were really designed; but these instances, explained by authentic evidence, may convince us, that the whole had a spiritual meaning; and as we are taught in the gospel every thing necessary to faith and practice, in the plainest manner, we need not give ourselves much trouble about discovering the meaning of the other rites, which are not explained by the prophets and apostles.

But the affair of sacrifice, so often mentioned in the Old Testament, was a type of the great Redeemer, and will be best explained by a careful attention to the Life, Sufferings and Death of Our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which will be the subject of the succeeding part of our Work.

A NEW AND COMPLETE
UNIVERSAL HISTORY
OF THE
HOLY BIBLE.

PART II.

Containing the HISTORY of the NEW TESTAMENT.

BOOK I.

From the Birth of CHRIST, to his Ascension into Heaven.

[Including a Period of 33 Years.]

CHAP. I.

Containing, by way of Introduction, a summary View of the great difference between the law as delivered by Moses and the Prophets, and the Gospel under Christ and his Apostles.

THE historical part of the New Testament is contained in the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and, in a very particular manner, claims the most serious attention of every Christian, as it conveys to us the blessed tidings of our recovering that happy state which our first parents forfeited in paradise.

All those excellencies, which in general belong to the *Old Testament*, may, in a more peculiar manner, be claimed by the *New*; for (as St. Augustine says) "What the law and the prophets only foretold, the Gospel plainly demonstrates to have been compleated." If, therefore, the good and holy men under the dispensation of the law (which was but a shadow of what hath since come to pass) were encour-

aged to undergo the severest persecutions in hopes of a reward to come, how much greater encouragement had the saints under the Gospel to suffer extremity, when the reward was gone before them? From hence the church, in all ages, hath received the most distinguished benefits: hence the martyrs, in the midst of their agonies, took magnanimity, looking up with confidence to the great Author of their reward. Thus the proto-martyr St. Stephen, in the midst of a shower of stones, was comforted with the sight of the Son of God. Hence the Holy Apostles, and the rest of Our Saviour's followers, enforced the doctrines of their Lord, not from the distant relations of others, but from the more immediate dictates of his mouth whence, by a sacred and certain tradition they

they have been handed down to the present time.

It is from Our Blessed Saviour's more immediate example that we are made properly acquainted with humility and meekness, he having been pleased, though the Son of God, to condescend to take upon him the vile condition of sinful man. From him we learn patience in adversity, and equanimity in the most elevated state of life: and whatever blemishes, by the corruptions of nature, may stain our profession, his word is our rule and guide to set us right again, and restore religion to its primitive purity. For this reason Our Blessed Lord calls himself *the light of the world*; of which his holy gospel is the happy instrument of conveying it to mankind, who, till his incarnation, sat in darkness. And hence the prophet Isaiah, foretelling the coming of Our Saviour, says, *The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined*, Is. ix. 2.

From the pre-excellence of the Gospel conveying this light to us, the scriptures of the New Testament have acquired such reverence and veneration, that some of the greatest people of the world, and in the earliest ages of the church, have thought them worthy their highest esteem and regard. Constantine the Great had the gospels bound up in a cover of gold set with most valuable jewels. Theodosius the emperor transcribed the Gospels with his own hand, and spent great part of every night in reading them. The general councils of Nice, Ephesus, and Chalcedon, placed the book of the Gospels in the midst of their assemblies, that the holy fathers might have respect to them as to the person of Christ. In short, the theologists of all ages have deservedly, and with a general consent, stiled this part of holy scripture most necessary and useful: and, indeed, if we pay a proper attention to the subject-matter, Author and method, or manner of them, we shall see those epithets justly appropriated to the writings of the New Testament.

With respect to the subject-matter of the Gospels, it is of God himself, whether we consider him either as God or man. The Gospels describe to us the words and actions of Our Blessed Redeemer, by which he taught us to believe and do our duty, as also what methods we ought to take to obtain eternal happiness, plentifully furnishing us, from his own mouth, with Divine precepts and counsel, instructing us in the perfection of a Christian life, explaining to us Faith, Hope, Charity, the Doctrine of the Trinity, Institution of the Sacraments, and, in general, all theological subjects; painting Virtue to us in its most amiable aspect, and describing Vice in its most horrid appearance, with the dreadful consequences which must naturally follow such a course of life.

As to the Author himself, he is no less than the Divine Wisdom, who chiefly both speaks and acts in the most material and grand occurrences related in the Gospels: for before (as the apostle to the Hebrews says) "God formerly spake to our fathers by the prophets, but in these later days by his son, whom he hath made heir of all things, and by whom he made the world." So

that not Moses, or the prophets, but the only begotten Son of God, hath, by the Divine will of the Father, discovered to us the secrets of the Divine Wisdom, and communicated them to us in the holy gospels: in which those sacred mysteries, concealed from antient times, and barely shadowed out in the typical expressions of the law and the prophets, are plainly discovered, and made intelligible to the weakest of human beings.

The method or manner of speaking and reasoning in the Holy Gospels is particularly to be admired, more especially in those parts wherein it is symbolical. The elegance of the metaphors, the aptness of the similitudes, and significance of the parables, were truly delightful and instructing. One time the Son of God compares himself to a king celebrating the nuptials of his son; another time, to a great man calling his son to account for his conduct: now, to a general waging war; then to a master of a family, an husbandman, a shepherd, a fisherman, &c. In all which the comparisons are so proper, that he represents himself to our capacities, not so much by words as by the things themselves: so that in the Gospel we may be said to be instructed as much by the actions, as the words of Christ: and truly, as St. Gregory says, *every action of Christ is our instruction*.

But the method of the Evangelical Wisdom claims another excellency: for it is so disposed by the Holy Ghost, that the most simple and ignorant are not destitute of advantage in the reading it; and at the same time there are sufficient difficulties and obscurities to exercise the genius of the most sublime wit. It is, indeed, plain and easy, to the sincere, humble and willing; but to the confident, proud and indolent, difficult and obscure. *I thank thee* (says Our Blessed Lord) *O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise, and hast revealed them unto babes*, Matt. xi. 25. In short, the Gospel, with respect to the rest of the Scriptures, is like the sun that communicates light to the planets, which, at their best, shine but with borrowed rays.

But the excellence of the Gospel will yet appear more conspicuous, if we draw a parallel between that and the law.

The author of the law was Moses, mere man; but the author of the Gospel was Jesus Christ, both God and man. The law, indeed, was ordained by the ministry of angels in the hand of a mediator, who was Moses, the mediator between God and the Israelites; but Christ, the Son of God, first promulged the Gospel with his own mouth. The apostle to the Hebrews points out the great disparity between Moses and Christ in the most elegant and expressive words: *Christ* (says he) *being the brightness of his glory*, (meaning the glory of God) *and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of Majesty on high: being made so much better than the angels as he hath, by inheritance, obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?* Heb. i. 3, &c.

The

The angels, indeed, as ministering spirits, were the first publishers of the Gospel, as in the messages of Gabriel the archangel to the Virgin Mary, and to Zacharias the father of St. John the Baptist; but Christ himself was the founder of it, and clothed his divinity with our flesh through which he dictated to us the words of his Gospel. *The law (says St. John) was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ.* All the authorities, both of the Old and New Testament, do agree, that Christ, being the Author of the Gospel, it is justly called *His Gospel*, and not improperly termed, *The Book, Philosophy and Theology of Christ*, in which, with his own mouth, he declared much more noble and sublime things than were delivered by Moses and the prophets: wherefore, when we read or hear the Holy Gospel, we may be said to read or hear the very express words of the Son of God himself.

Upon a farther examination we shall find many other striking particulars in which the doctrine of the Gospel greatly exceeds what we find in Moses and the law. The law fixes one God to be believed and worshipped by us; but the Gospel, one God in essence, and three in person, to be loved and adored: *Go, (says Our Lord) and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Matth. xxviii. 19.*

The prophets, at a great distance of time, foretold the birth, life, passion and ascension of Christ, the Mission of the Holy Ghost, and the conversion of the Gentiles: but the Gospel positively and clearly lays down the Prescience, Providence, Omnipotence, immense Charity, and other attributes of God. *No man hath seen God at any time, but the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, hath declared him, John i. 18.* That is, Christ leaving his immortal state for a time, condescended to the condition of vile mortality, that he might discover to us the secrets of his Father, which were known to him only.

The law is, as it were, the shadow; but the Gospel is the very substance itself. Thus the acts of the patriarchs, the oracles and symbolic visions of the prophets, the sacrifices, ceremonies and decrees of the laws, which received their sanctions by the blood of animals, were types and preludes which enigmatically represented Christ to the people: but the Gospel manifestly and clearly exhibits to us Christ, his Mysteries and Sacraments. This is positively affirmed by St. Paul, who says, *We all with open face behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord, 2 Cor. iii. 18.* And in confirmation of this, the same apostle begins his epistle to the Romans thus: "Paul a servant of Jesus Christ called to be an apostle, set apart to preach the Gospel of God, which he had promised before by his prophets in the Holy Scriptures concerning his Son, &c."

The law was a messenger of fear and terror; but the Gospel, of Love and Peace: the one threatened death to transgressors, the other, rewards to believers. By the law all were servants; but by the Gospel all are free. Agreeable to

this are the words of St. Paul: "God hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the Letter, but of the Spirit; for the Letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. For if the ministration of death, (that is, the Law threatening death) written with letters, and on stones, was glorious, &c. how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be more glorious?" From whence we may justly define the Gospel to be a law of liberty, a law of the spirit, a law of beneficence and charity.

The promises of the law were of a temporary nature, subject to vicissitudes; but the Gospel promises are celestial and eternal. In the law were promised the good things of the earth, such as plenty of oil, wine, cattle, &c. but in the Gospel, the enjoyment of the company of Christ, and everlasting happiness. Joshua conducted the Israelites to a land flowing with milk and honey, but it was to the land of the dying: Christ hath brought us into the land of the living, a land shining with and abounding in grace and glory. Besides, the law was burthensome in respect of its threefold division into Moral, Ceremonial and Judicial, many parts of which decreed death to transgressors: but the obligations laid on the professors of the Gospel are easy and pleasant. *Come unto me (says our Blessed Saviour) all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burthen is light, Matth. xi. 28, &c.*

The law was an introduction to Christ and the Gospel; but the Gospel is the boundary and end of the law. St. Paul says, *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, Rom. x. 4.* Wherefore St. Bernard very justly calls Christ the Fruit of the promises of the law, alluding to the seminal virtue of plants; "for fruit (says he) is the purpose to which seeds tend, and in which they terminate."

The pre-excellence of the Gospel will yet appear much greater if we consider that the law was limited to the Jews only; whereas the Gospel was to be diffused all over the world. The law was likewise imperfect with respect to its duration; for it was only temporary, being to continue no longer than the coming of the Gospel, at which times it was to cease. This is expressly affirmed by the apostle to the Hebrews, who says, *For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God, Heb. vii. 18, 19.*

If we consider the whole texture and composition of the Gospel, we shall find it very happily adapted to all ages, degrees and conditions; and that it may be justly called an universal library of wisdom and knowledge, wherein every one may see their duty, and learn to put it in practice. If we attentively examine the conduct of the great Founder of the Gospel, while on earth, we shall plainly see that his whole life was one continued series of moral discipline; and that what he taught to others, himself practised, enforcing his precepts by his own example.

While the world were anxiously seeking after the pernicious bait of wealth, he was content and calm in the midst of poverty. Impatient man could not brook an affront; but he patiently submitted to the vilest reproach. Corporal pains were terrible to human nature; but he bore whipping and scourging without the least lamentation. Nothing so shocking to poor mortality as the bare apprehension of its dissolution; but he quietly submitted himself to the most ignominious death—even the death of the cross.

That the law was imperfect we have already made appear; but there is not any thing which so clearly points out its imperfections and deficiencies as does Christ himself, in that admirable parallel which he draws between the Old Testament and the the New, and which is contained in the 5th chapter of St. Matthew. He there sets both in a true light: shews the necessity of reforming and improving some decrees of the law, and instituting a better and more useful system of virtue and piety. The precepts of the law were positive and conformable to nature; but the commands of the Gospel transcend them: they are far more instructing, and furnish us with the most wholesome counsel, and the most beneficial admonitions. *A new commandment* (says our Blessed Saviour) *I give unto you, That ye love one another, as I have loved you,* John xiii. 34.

If we address ourselves, as we ought, to the practice of that system of Evangelical Theology contained in the 5th chapter of St. Matthew, we may, from thence, draw such demonstrable inferences as will direct us in the performance of our duty, and crown our obedience with rewards. From the beatitudes in the beginning of this chapter, we are assured, from Our Blessed Lord's own mouth, that if we are poor in spirit, we shall gain the kingdom of heaven: if we mourn here, we shall be comforted: if we hunger and thirst after righteousness, we shall be satisfied. For this reason St. Augustine says, "The happiness of this life consists in the Holy Gospel, and the rest of the Sacred records, without which we cannot come to the knowledge of God." All true knowledge, virtue and perfection, that a Christian can desire, or attain to, are contained in the Gospels. There Christ teaches us, that righteousness and holiness consist in the inward purity and integrity of the mind, not in the outward shew of works—in a conscience void of offence; not in the pompous applause of men—in humility; not in

ostentation—in contempt, not in pursuit of worldly honours—And he likewise teaches us to love our enemies as well as our friends.

The law layeth down a naked precept to the understanding of man; but the Gospel, at the same time that it instructs, inspires his will with grace to perform what is commanded him. Christ, in his Gospel, does not express himself externally to our ears, but internally to our minds, where, by his persuasive spirit, he inclines us to believe and practise what he teaches: *My words,* says he, *are spirit and life,* John vi. 63. And to this purpose the apostle to the Hebrews cites the prophet Jeremiah: "This is the Testament that I will make unto them after those days," saith the Lord; "I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them," Jer. xxxi. 33.

From these distinguished excellencies of the Gospels, and the preference deservedly given them to all other sacred writings, there can be no motive so pressing to incite us to the study of them as their own worth; and, next to that, our interest, which we cannot be said more really to pursue, than by a strict and religious observance of the duties contained in them.

The heav'ns declare thy glory, Lord;
In ev'ry star thy wisdom shines;
But when our eyes behold thy word,
We read thy name in fairer lines.

The rolling sun, the changing light,
And nights and days thy pow'r confess;
But the vast volume thou hast writ
Reveals thy justice and thy grace.

Sun, moon and stars convey thy praise
Round the whole earth, in one large band;
So when thy truth began its race,
It touch'd and glanc'd on ev'ry land.

Nor shall thy spreading Gospel rest,
Till through the world thy truth has run:
Till Christ has all the nations blest'd
That see the light, or feel the sun.

Great Sun of Righteousness arise,
Bless the dark world with heav'nly light;
Thy Gospel makes the simple wise,
Thy Laws are pure, thy Judgments right.

Thy noblest wonders here we view,
In souls renew'd, and sins forgiv'n:
Lord, cleanse our minds, our souls renew,
And make thy word our guide to heav'n.

C H A P. II.

Presage of the birth of John the Baptist. Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary by the angel Gabriel. The Holy Virgin visits her cousin Elizabeth. Birth of John the Baptist. Conception of the Virgin Mary. Augustus Caesar issues a decree for a general taxation. Birth of Christ, and his manifestation to the shepherds. His Circumcision and presentation in the temple. His manifestation to the wise men of the east. Herod, king of Judea, seeks to destroy him, but his intentions are frustrated. The Flight of Joseph into Egypt. Horrid massacre of the infants at Bethlehem. Death of Herod.

THE temple of Janus was shut * at Rome—Peace was within the walls of Jerusalem—and the time approaching, when the Great Creator of the Universe was about to fulfil the covenant he had long before made to his chosen people, by sending into the world his only son in order to recover mankind from the wretched state into which they had been so long involved by the sins of their first parents.

In pursuance of this, and for the completion of many other promises which God, by his holy prophets, from the beginning, had made to his people, he was pleased first to send his harbinger to prepare the way before the Saviour of the World, who was now about to make his public entry into it. And that the fulfilling of these prophecies might be still the more wonderful, the conception of John Baptist, the harbinger †, or forerunner of Christ, was introduced with a distinguished miracle; whereby God not only displayed his Omnipotence (which is not always circumscribed within the bounds of scanty nature) but at the same time excited the minds of men to an expectance of something extraordinary from such supernatural means.

Towards the latter end of the reign of Herod the Great, king of Judea, there lived at Jerusalem a certain priest named Zacharias, who was of the tribe of Levi, as was also his wife Elizabeth. They were both of peculiar descent, he

being a priest of the course of Abiah (which was the eighth according to the division of David) and the lineally descended from the daughters of Aaron. Nor were their characters inferior to the excellency of their extraction, they being just before God, and unblameable in their conversation. Hitherto God had not been pleased to bless them with an issue; and both being far advanced in years they had not any reason to hope for, or expect, any offspring. But the peculiarity of their descent, and the innocence of their lives, recommended them to the particular care and protection of God, who was pleased to make them the instruments of his glory, by exercising on them his Omnipotence in a manner of the most extraordinary nature.

While Zacharias was one day executing his priestly office before God, in the order of his course, (which was to burn incense in the temple) the very same angel, (who had appeared to Daniel the prophet with a certain information as to the period of the Messiah's coming, as well as his transactions in this lower world) suddenly appeared before him, and foretold that a child should spring from him and his wife Elizabeth (notwithstanding their very advanced age) who should be endowed with extraordinary gifts from heaven, and should be honoured with being the forerunner of the great Saviour of the World.

The good old priest was no less astonished at the

* It was the custom, in times of war, for the gates of the temple of Rome to be laid open, but shut in times of peace; and it was now the fifth time, since the building of that city, that the gates of the temple had been shut. The first time was in the reign of Numa: the second, after the end of the first Punick war: the third after Augustus's victory over Antony: the fourth, upon his return from the Cantabrian war in Spain: and the fifth now, in the 26th year of his reign, and the 23d of Herod's; when a general peace (which lasted for twelve years together) prevailed over the world, and was a proper prelude for ushering in the Advent of the Prince of Peace, even Christ, our Lord, who, according to the most general computation, was born in the 4004th year of the world's creation.

† There are two places referred to in the prophets, wherein the Baptist is described under this character. The first is in the prophet Isaiah: *The voice of one crying in the wilderness prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert an highway for our God*, chap. xl. 3. The latter, which is much more plain and express, is in Malachi, *Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me*, &c. chap. iii. 1. Both these passages allude to harbingers, and such other officers as, upon the journies of princes, were employed to take care that the ways should be levelled, and put in order, and all such obstructions removed, as

might interrupt their passage, or render it less commodious: and the manner in which the Baptist thus prepared the way of the Lord was, by his *Preaching*, and by his *Baptism*. By his preaching, he endeavoured to bring the Jews to a due sense of their sins; and to forewarn all those of the dreadful effects of God's anger, who did not bring forth fruits worthy of repentance. And by his Baptism, when administered to such persons as were under the obligation of the law, he plainly shewed, that he was therein admitting them to some *privileges*, which they had not enjoyed before, viz. the remission of their sins upon their faith and obedience to him, who was the *Messenger of the Covenant*. Since, therefore, the Baptist was not only born, but entered upon his ministry, six months before Our Saviour, and since his baptism referred every one to Christ for acceptance and salvation, he is very properly said to be his *harbinger*, a messenger sent to prepare his way before him, or to set all things in readiness for his approach, by putting an end to the *old*, and making an entrance into the *new*, dispensation. In this sense he is represented by the Fathers, as a kind of *middle partition* between the Law and the Gospel: of the *law*, as a thing now come to a period; and of the *gospel*, as commencing under him, who was shortly to make his appearance on earth for the redemption of lost mankind.

the subject of the mission, than he was at the appearance of the messenger. The sense of his own great age, as well as his wife's long sterility, had made him express a kind of diffidence in his promise, and, for his farther satisfaction, desire some miracle in confirmation of it. It is true he was not insensible that the authority of the angel was derived from the Divine Majesty above. But, as it is the lot of humanity to err, he had, at that time, forgot that nothing was impossible to Omnipotence, as well as that it would not be the first time that the aged were caused to conceive, and bear a child. The least reflection would have reminded him, that Sarah conceived, and bear Isaac, when he was far advanced in years; and that Samuel was born of a woman, who had been long reputed, and even called, barren.

But these things Zacharias had forgot; and therefore, when he asked for some sign of a confirmation of the promise made by the Divine messenger, the angel told him, that he was no less than Gabriel, a special attendant on God's throne, and dispatched on purpose to inform him of his great happiness; but that since he was so incredulous as to require a sign, he should have such an one as would be both a punishment of his unbelief, and a confirmation of his faith; for, until the birth of the child, he should be totally deprived of his speech. *Behold, (said he) thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that those things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.*

It was not long before the denunciation of the angel was fulfilled, for no sooner did Zacharias leave the temple, than he was instantly deprived of his speech. When, therefore, he saw the people (who waited without to receive his benediction) he made signs to them that he was not able to speak, from whence they concluded that he had seen some extraordinary vision within. Zacharias now returned home, soon after which his wife Elizabeth (according to the prediction of the angel) found herself with child, though her modesty made her conceal it for the space of five months.

Thus was the reproach of barrenness taken off from Elizabeth, in her old age, by her conception of the Baptist; soon after which the birth of the Messiah was ushered into the world by no less wonderful, but rather more extraordinary means. That a woman, generally esteemed barren, and far advanced in years, should bear a child, was within the verge of possibility: but that a virgin, who had never known man, should conceive and bear a child, exceeded all natural reason and credibility, and could only arise from the great wisdom and dispensations of

the Divine Being. This the Almighty had promised, and now most punctually performed. Within six months after Elizabeth's conception, the same angel Gabriel was sent to Nazareth, a city of Galilee, to a virgin named Mary (a near relation to Elizabeth, and of the house of David) who had, a short time before, been espoused to one Joseph, a person of the same pedigree, but of no higher profession than that of a Carpenter.

As soon as the angel entered the house where the virgin abode (for as yet she had not been taken to her espoused husband) he saluted her with this heavenly benediction: *Hail! thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women!* The sudden appearance of the Angel struck Mary with amazement and surprize, to remove which the angel farther said unto her, *Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus.* The Holy Virgin, conscious of her own virtue, and yet surprized at this uncommon salutation, began to expostulate with the heavenly messenger on the possibility of the thing, since she had all along lived in a strict state of virginity. But the angel, to satisfy her in this particular, told her, that this wonderful work was to be effected by the invisible power and operation of the Holy Ghost; and, to convince her that nothing was impossible with the Almighty, gave her to understand that her cousin Elizabeth (notwithstanding her old age, and former sterility) was at that time six months with child. In consequence of this information, and in reverence to the person who delivered it, the Holy Virgin humbly acquiesced in whatever God was pleased to do with her; and as soon as the angel was departed, she made the necessary preparations for going to Hebron in order to pay a visit to her cousin Elizabeth, and to congratulate her on the joyful news she had received from the angel relative to her being six months gone with child.

As soon as Mary arrived at Zachariah's house, she informed her cousin of what had been told her by the angel; upon which Elizabeth felt the child move within her; and, being inspired with the Holy Ghost, she exclaimed, *Blessed art thou above thy sex! Blessed is the fruit of thy body! And how great is my felicity to be visited by the mother of my Lord!* Nor did her extacy cease with this token of humility and joy on the important event, in the ardour of which she evinced that prophetic influence, which, while it amazed the Blessed Virgin, could not fail of establishing her belief in what the angel had foretold; for she repeated the very words expressed by the Divine

vine

† Nazareth was a city of the Lower Galilee, situate in the south part of that province, and therefore not far from the confines of Samaria to the south, and nearer to the territories of Tyre and Sidon to the north-west. It is at present only an inconsiderable village, lying in a kind of concave valley. Mr. Maundrell says, "Here is a convent built over what is said to be the place of the Annunciation, or where the Blessed Virgin received the joyful message brought her by the angel."

§ Espousing or betrothing was nothing more than a solemn promise of marriage made by two persons, each to the other, at such a distance of time as was agreed upon between them. After such espousal was made (which was generally when the

parties were young) the woman continued with her parents several months, if not some years, before she was taken home, and the marriage consummated. This was the case with the Blessed Virgin, who was discernably with child before she and her intended husband came together. The custom of espousing or betrothing in this manner was instituted that the parties contracted might have some intermediate time to think seriously of the great change they were going to make in their condition; to discourse more freely together on their domestic affairs; and to implore God's blessing and protection over them and theirs, in all the changes and chances of this mortal life.

Engraved for Kington's History of the Bible.



The Presentation of our BLESSED SAVIOUR in the Temple

vine Messenger in his salutation of the Holy Virgin, *Blessed art thou among women.* The happy Virgin, catching the holy flame from the aged Elizabeth, broke out into a rapture of thanksgiving to God, wherein she recounted his mercies, and the promises which he had made to the people of Israel, and which, by making her the blessed instrument of them, he was now about to fulfil.

The Blessed Virgin continued with her cousin Elizabeth about three months, at the expiration of which time she departed, and returned to Nazareth. A short time after she was delivered of a Son, and on the eighth day, when the child was circumcised, his relations and friends were not a little surprised to hear that he was to be called John, as there was not any of the family who bore that name. But how much greater was their surprise when they found that, upon this occasion, the father's speech was immediately altered to him, which he employed in the praises of Almighty God for the wonderful prodigies he had wrought among them.

And now the time was at hand, when the great joy that the birth of the Baptist had occasioned was to be augmented by the more miraculous birth of the Saviour of Mankind, which was to be the perfect completion of what the angel Gabriel had promised to both their mothers.

After the Holy Virgin had returned to Nazareth she concealed, as long as she could, the great mystery (which God had wrought in her) from her espoused husband, till at length her pregnant symptoms plainly discovered it; and though her deportment had been exceeding chaste and modest, yet Joseph might be well assured she was with child. This raised no little concern in his breast; but being a merciful good man, and unwilling either to expose the honour of her family, which he thought she had stained, or to inflict public punishment on her according to the sentence of the law, he resolved upon a separation with the utmost privacy. But before he could put his design into execution, an angel from heaven appeared to him in a vision, informing him that his wife's conception was the immediate work of the Holy Ghost. Joseph (said the Divine messenger) *thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sin.* Matt. i. 20, 21.

The pious Joseph was strictly obedient to the heavenly vision. The next day he took home the Holy Virgin, with whom, to all outward appearance, he lived in conjugal love, though he never knew her till after she was delivered of her first-born, the great Saviour and Redeemer of Israel.

A short time before the birth of Our Blessed Saviour, Augustus Cæsar issued out a general edict, that the names of all persons subject to the Roman empire, with their estates and conditions, should be registered at certain appointed places, according to their different provinces, cities and families, and that a tax should be paid by all in proportion to their respective circum-

stances. In consequence of this decree, Joseph and his wife Mary, being both of the tribe of Judah, and family of David, were obliged to go as far as Bethlehem, which was the north-city of their tribe, in order to have their names and estates enrolled. From the great conflux of people assembled on this occasion, all the inns, and public places of recreation were filled, so that no better places could be found for their lodging than a stable. In this lowly tenement the Blessed Virgin brought forth her first-born Son, whom she wrapped in swaddling clothes, and, having no better convenience, laid him in a manger.

But notwithstanding the great Redeemer of mankind was born in this obscure manner, yet there were several very extraordinary circumstances and occurrences that attended it, which plainly bespoke him the Son of God. On the very night of his birth the wise disposer of all things was pleased, by his holy angel, to make it known to some shepherds, who were attending their flocks on the plain of Bethlehem. The radiance which shone around the angel, terrified the astonished peasants; but to dissipate their fears, and confirm their joy, the Divine messenger addressed them in these words: *Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born, this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger,* Luke ii. 10, &c. Immediately after the holy angel had delivered the joyful tidings, an innumerable company of the same celestial choir broke out into this triumphant doxology: *Glory be to God on high, Peace on earth, and good will towards men.*

As soon as this heavenly concert was ended, the overjoyed shepherds, remembering the sign which the angel, before he disappeared, had given them, immediately hastened to Bethlehem, where they found the Virgin-Mother, and Joseph the supposed father, attending the God-like babe, whom, in humble reverence they adored, and then returned, praising and extolling the mercies of God; and, to the great amazement of all that heard them, publishing in all places what they had seen and heard concerning the child.

On the eighth day after Our Blessed Saviour's birth, his parents, in obedience to the Mosaic law, had him circumcised; and, in conformity to the order which the angel had given to his mother before her conception, they called his name JESUS. As soon as forty days were elapsed after his birth, two other ceremonies were performed, viz. the Purification of his mother, and the Presentation of her first-born in the temple. Though, from the immaculate conception of her son there certainly needed not the former ceremony, yet the Holy Virgin was determined to shew her humility and obedience to the Mosaic institution. She therefore went up with Joseph to Jerusalem, there to offer the sacrifice prescribed by the law for her own purification, and there also to present her Son to the Lord, by delivering him into the priest's hands, and redeeming him again for five shekels.

While the Blessed Virgin was performing this last ceremony there entered the temple a pious

and venerable man, named Simeon, who, with all the devout, had waited day and night for the consolation of Israel, and to whom it had been revealed, by the spirit of truth, that he should not depart this life till he had seen the Lord of life and salvation. Accordingly, it was signified to him by the Holy Ghost (at whose instance he went at the precise time into the temple) that the child there presented was the long expected Messiah, even the Redeemer of Israel. He, therefore, no sooner saw the Blessed Infant, than he immediately took it into his arms, and, in an heavenly extacy, praised God for the completion of his promises, in letting him live to see the Saviour of the world before he quitted it. Lord, said he, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. Luke xi. 29, &c.

No sooner had Simeon finished his Divine Rapture, than an ancient woman of the tribe of Aser, named Anna, who was remarkable for her piety and devotion, serenity of life, and constantly frequenting the public worship, entered the temple, and being herself likewise excited by a prophetic spirit, gave God thanks for his infinite mercies; testifying, at the same time, that the Blessed Infant was the true Messiah, and, on her departure, declared the glad tidings to all the faithful in those parts.

Having thus, in every respect, complied with the ceremonies and rites contained in the law of Moses, Joseph and Mary, with the child Jesus, left Jerusalem, and went to their own city of Nazareth in Galilee. But here they abode only a very short time, for as soon as they could conveniently adjust their domestic affairs, they went to Bethlehem, thinking the place of Our Lord's nativity the most proper spot for their fixed residence.

Soon after Joseph and Mary had left Jerusalem there appeared in that city certain strangers, who came from afar off, and were of a rank and character somewhat extraordinary. The Omnipotent Being, in order to notify the birth of his son, as well to the Gentiles as to the Jews, had caused an uncommon star to rise in the east, which three wise men, or astronomers in those parts observing, and understanding withal that it was to signify the birth of the Messiah promised to the Jews, travelled to the metropolis of Judea, in order to find out this new-born prince, that they might testify their homage and adoration of him.

The public character and appearance of these three strangers, together with their openly calling the Divine Infant the *king of the Jews*, not only threw Herod * into the greatest consternation, but likewise occasioned a general commotion throughout the whole city of Jerusalem. Herod, however, being resolved to destroy this sup-

posed rival in his kingdom; assembled the whole body of the Sanhedrim, and (not yet knowing of Our Blessed Saviour's nativity) demanded of them the very place where the Messiah should be born. They told him that Bethlehem (in the land assigned to the tribe of Judah) was the very spot which the Holy Spirit, by the prophet Micah, had marked out for this great event. In consequence of this intelligence Herod immediately dismissed the assembly, and sending for the three strangers with the utmost secrecy, he enquired of them the exact time of the appearance of the star. Being resolved this question, he immediately sent them to Bethlehem, with orders to search for the young prince, and, when they had discovered where he was, to bring him word to him, that he, in like manner, might go and pay homage to him. But this was mere policy, and vile hypocrisy: for he far from Herod retaining any religious regard for the Divine Infant, that he had determined in his heart to destroy him as soon as he should be found. He considered him in the light of a temporal prince, who might expel him, or his descendants, from the throne, instead of a prince whose kingdom was wholly spiritual, and whose throne was not to be established upon earth, but in the heavenly Jerusalem.

The three strangers, having received these instructions from Herod, immediately left Jerusalem, and set forward for Bethlehem. In their way they were very agreeably surprized with the sight of the same miraculous star they had seen in their country, which (like the fiery pillar in the wilderness) went before, and directed them to the very house where the Blessed Jesus, and his mother abode. As soon as they entered in, they fell prostrate on the ground, according to the Eastern custom, and, having in this manner, adored the child, they then presented him with the richest products of their country, such as gold and precious odours, but more particularly frankincense and myrrh.

The Eastern strangers, having thus performed their homage to the Blessed Jesus, intended to return to Jerusalem, and acquaint Herod with the happy discovery they had made: but they were diverted from carrying their design into execution by a vision they had that very night, which apprized them of Herod's cruel intentions, and at the same time directed them, for their own safety, to pursue another course than that they had come to their own country. These directions were strictly attended to by the strangers, and thereby was defeated the wicked intention of the malicious Herod.

Not long after this, an angel was sent to Joseph to acquaint him with Herod's intended cruelty against the child, and at the same time to order him to retire into Egypt with him and his mother. Joseph instantly obeyed the Divine command, and, for fear of discovery, taking the

advantage

* The ambitious and cruel Herod, who was naturally of a very jealous and suspicious temper, knew well that himself was hated by the Jews, and that the Jews were then in full expectation of the Messiah (a Prince that was to subdue all other nations) to come and reign over them. He had, therefore, great reason to fear that the rumour of a

king being born among them, confirmed by such extraordinary means as persons coming from a far country, and conducted to Jerusalem by the guidance of a wonderful star, might be a means of exciting sedition among the people, and might, perhaps, occasion a revolution in the government.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



MATTHEW II. 14.

The FLIGHT into EGYPT.

advantage of the night, he, with all possible expedition, set forward for Egypt—*And was there (with the child and his mother) until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet: Out of Egypt have I called my son.*

In the mean time Herod waited impatiently for the return of the Eastern sages; but at length finding himself deluded, and his most secret and subtle designs frustrated, he fell into a most violent rage, and resolved to effect by cruelty what he had been disappointed of doing by policy. To this purpose he ordered a large party of soldiers to go throughout the city of Bethlehem, and the adjoining villages, and massacre all the children they could find therein that were two years old and under; thinking that the infant Jesus, whom as a prince he both envied and dreaded, would fall in the general slaughter. But God had provided the heavenly missionary with a safe retreat. The shrieks, however, of tender mothers for their innocent

babes; and the groans of expiring infants, which, on this occasion, filled the skies, were inexpressible: death and remediless despair raged in every place; and the surface of the earth was crimsoned with innocent blood. But it was not long before the Divine vengeance overtook the author of this dreadful scene, he being afflicted with a most uncommon and dreadful distemper, which, in a short time, put a period to his existence †.

Herod, some time before his death, had made a will, which was, in some measure, confirmed by Augustus; and in it he settled his dominions upon his sons and his sister. He made Archelaus his successor in that part of his kingdom which included Judea, Idumæa, and Samaria: to Philip he gave Auranitis, Trachonitis, Panea, and Batanea: to Herod Antipas, Galilee and Peræa; and to his sister Salome, some particular cities, with a considerable sum of money.

† It is clearly evident, from the nature of Herod's disease, and the misery he suffered under it, that it was inflicted on him by Providence as a punishment for his horrid cruelty to the innocent and harmless children. Josephus tells us, that not long after the massacre of the infants at Bethlehem, his distemper daily increased, and that he laboured under the most loathsome and tormenting complaints. "He had (says he) a lingering and wasting fever, and grievous ulcers in his entrails and bowels; a violent cholick, an insatiable appetite, a venomous swelling in his feet, convulsions in his nerves, an almost perpetual asthma, and stinking breath, rottenness in his joints, accompanied with prodigious itchings, crawling worms, and intolerable scents, so that he was a perfect hospital of incurable diseases. And thus he died in horrid pain and torment, being smitten by Providence for his many enormous iniquities."

There certainly never was a more wicked man, or compleat tyrant than Herod. He suppressed, and changed the high-priest's office as he thought fit, and even profaned the temple itself. He caused the legal king of the Jews to be slain, extirpated all the race of the Maccabees, removed the whole Sanhedrim, and placed others in their stead. Nor was his rage confined to the Jews, but descended to his own family and nearest relations, even to the executing his beloved wife Mariamne, and his own sons Alexander and Aristobulus, upon slight and trivial occasions. As he was conscious to himself of the wickedness of his life, so he had great reason to imagine, that, instead of any true lamentation at his death, there would be much rejoicing throughout the whole kingdom

of Judea; and therefore, to prevent this he framed a project, which was one of the most horrid that ever entered into the mind of man. He summoned all the nobility, and most considerable men in every city, town and village in Judea, upon pain of death, to meet together at Jericho, where he then lay sick. As soon as they were assembled he ordered his soldiers to shut them all up in a spacious place, called the Hippodrome; after which, calling to him his sister Salome, and her husband Alexas, with some choice friends, he told them, "That he was sensible of the hatred of the Jews to his person and government, and that his death would be an high satisfaction to them: that his friends, therefore, ought to procure him some solace in the midst of his bitter anguish, which if they performed according to his order, the mournings and lamentations at his death would be as great and magnificent as ever any prince had. The substance of this order was, that on the same hour when he expired the soldiers should surround the Hippodrome, put all the inclosed persons to the sword, and then publish his death, which (as he said) would cause his exit to be doubly triumphant; first, for the posthumous execution of his commands, and secondly, for the quality and number of his mourners." But Salome and Alexas, not being wicked enough to do what they had been made solemnly to promise, chose rather to break their obligation, than make themselves the executioners of so bloody a design; and therefore, as soon as Herod was dead, they ordered the Hippodrome to be opened, and permitted all that were shut up in it to return to their respective habitations.



C H A P. III.

Joseph returns out of Egypt, and takes up his residence at Nazareth in Galilee. Archelaus, who succeeds Herod in the government of Judea, is deposed by the emperor Augustus. Our Blessed Saviour, at twelve years of age, is found disputing with the doctors in the temple. Death of Augustus Caesar. The preaching of John the Baptist, and the manner of his life. Baptism of Christ, and visible descent of the Holy Ghost on that occasion. Commencement of Our Saviour's ministry. His temptation in the wilderness. His first miracle of turning water into wine at the marriage feast.

AS soon as the tyrant Herod was no more, his death was notified to Joseph by an heavenly messenger, who directed him immediately to leave Egypt, and return, with the child and its mother into the land of Israel. Joseph readily obeyed the Divine command; but, when he arrived in Judea, hearing that Archelaus succeeded Herod in that part of the country, and being apprehensive that the cruelty and ambition of the father might be entailed upon the son, he was fearful of settling in his dominions. But these disagreeable apprehensions were soon removed by his receiving a visit from another heavenly messenger, who directed him to retire to Nazareth in Galilee, which was under the government of Herod Antipas, a mild and benevolent prince, and where the particular circumstances which attended the birth of Our Blessed Saviour were not generally known.

The precise circumstances of Our Lord's childhood and life, previous to the time of his public ministry, are not noticed in the writings of the Evangelists, which can alone be relied on as authentic. All we can gather from those inspired men is, that Our Blessed Saviour's parents annually repaired with him to Jerusalem at the feast of the Passover; and that, as his body increased in stature, so more especially the faculties of his soul were enlarged, and highly replenished with the Grace of God. As his parents were poor he had not the advantage of a finished education, and seems to have received no other instruction than what his parents gave him, in conformity to the Jewish laws. But supernatural abilities amply compensated for the deficiency of natural acquirements, and he gave instances, in his earliest years, of the most amazing penetration, and extensive wisdom.

In the mean time Archelaus, king of Judea, following the steps of his cruel father Herod, made himself so obnoxious to the Jews, that the principal men among them, joining with those of Samaria, drew up a complaint against him, which they laid before Augustus Caesar, emperor of Rome. The emperor, after a full hearing on both sides the question, deprived Archelaus of his government, confiscated all his goods, banished him to Vienna, a city in Gaul, and reduced his dominions to the form of a Roman province, which, ever after, was ruled by a governor sent from Rome, who was called by the name of Procurator, but, in some cases, was subject to the President or Governor of Syria.

While Judea was reduced to this wretched state Our Blessed Saviour was advanced to the twelfth year of his age, at which time he went up with his parents, as usual, to celebrate the feast of the Passover at Jerusalem. His parents, after staying the whole seven days, and having performed the usual ceremonies on the occasion, were now returning, with great numbers of their neighbours and acquaintance, towards Galilee; and supposing that the Blessed Jesus had joined himself with some of the company, they travelled on a whole day's journey. But, when night came on, and they could not, among their relations and particular friends, hear any tidings of him, they were thrown into the utmost consternation, and immediately returned to Jerusalem in order to find him out, and take him with them to Nazareth.

After a most anxious search of three days they found him in one of the rooms of the temple (probably in that of the grand Sanhedrim) sitting among the learned doctors, and masters of Israel, hearing them discourse, and propounding such questions to them as raised the admiration of all that heard him, and made them astonished at his unbounded penetration.

The surprize of Our Blessed Saviour's parents in finding him within the walls of so sacred a place, and in such sublime employment, was beyond expression. His pious mother, notwithstanding the pleasure she received in having found him, could not help shewing the concern which his absence, without her knowledge had occasioned, Son, said she, *why hast thou dealt thus with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.* To this question Our Saviour replied in words to this effect: that their surprize at his absenting himself was groundless and absurd, as they must have been assured, from his extraordinary birth, and the wonderful circumstances attending it, that his heavenly Father was no less than the God of Israel: that himself assumed human nature to promote his glorious will; and therefore, as his errand was of such moment, they must not imagine he could always reside with them. *How is it, said he, that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?* These words were not clearly understood by the Blessed Virgin, but they struck such an impression on her mind that she ever after retained them in her memory.

Our Blessed Saviour, being thus happily found by his parents, returned with them to Nazareth, and

and lived with them in the most dutiful subjection, thereby affording a most glorious example for the imitation of all children, who certainly are bound to yield obedience to their parents, more especially since the Son of God himself, when on earth, set them the example.

In this humble state did the Blessed Jesus continue for some time, during which he greatly advanced both in knowledge and stature; and, by his extraordinary qualities, attracted the regard and admiration of all who either saw or heard him.

Being happily free from those inordinate, disquieting desires which disturb and distract mortals, he was always in temper calm and sedate, which, added to a pleasing countenance, enabled him to prove the strength of his mortal faculties, and the natural goodness of his disposition. He was also an excellent orator, being endued with a most nervous and persuasive elocution, insomuch that his hearers, frequently astonished at the substance and manner of his address, would suddenly call out, *Never man spake like this man.* And though, considered in his Divine nature, he was far superior to human nature, yet, during the time in which he lived thus humbly with his parents, he condescended to assist his father in his business of a carpenter, thereby learning us a most shining example both of industry and humility.—Thus obscurely did the Blessed Jesus live till the time of his public ministry, nor did he, till then, shew any miracles, or perform any actions to distinguish himself from the rest of mankind: his Divine nature, and annexed properties, during the time of his private life, being concealed under the veil of his human nature.

While Our Blessed Saviour continued in this obscure state, and when he was in the eighteenth year of his age, Augustus Cæsar, the Roman emperor, died at Nola in Campania (after a reign of near forty-four years) to the inexpresible grief of his subjects. He was succeeded by Tiberius, the son of his wife Livia by a former husband, who was a prince of a quite contrary disposition to his predecessor. In the second year of his accession to the Roman empire, he recalled Rufus from the government of Judea, and sent Valerius Gratus (who was the fourth governor in those parts since the banishment of Archelaus) to succeed him. Gratus, after continuing some time in his office, was recalled, and Pontius Pilate, a person, like his master Tiberius, of a fierce and irreconcilable spirit, and of a cruel and covetous disposition, was appointed governor in his stead.

A short time after Pontius Pilate was appointed to the government of Judea, John the Baptist began to open his commission for the preparation of Our Saviour's way before him, by preaching *the Baptism of Repentance for the Remission of sins.* From his infancy, till the time of his public ministry, he had been bred up in the wilderness of Judea, resembling the antient prophet Elijah in the coarseness of his cloathing, and the plainness of his diet. His dress consisted of a loose coat made of camel's hair, and fastened with a leathern girdle, which was the only garb he wore: his food was the spontaneous productions of the wilderness, such as locusts

and wild honey; and his drink the pure water of some chrystal spring. His course of life was, indeed, admirably adapted to inculcate the doctrines of Repentance and Reformation. By his free and resolute preaching, joined to his great severity of life, he soon obtained a prodigious number of profelytes, not only in Judea, but also from Jerusalem. Persons of all ranks and qualities flocked to him, confessed their sins to God, were baptized in the river Jordan, and submitted to whatever he prescribed as necessary towards their obtaining an inheritance in the mansions above.

Among the great multitudes who went to hear the preaching of John the Baptist, were many Pharisees and Sadducees, whose confidence and immorality he sharply reprovèd; while at the same time he exhorted the common people to works of charity; the publicans to avoid oppression and injustice; the soldiers to abstain from plunder and violence; and, in short, he cautioned every one to beware of those crimes to which they were most exposed by their respective occupations and employments in life.

The Baptist, throughout the whole of his ministration, happily adapted his discourses to the circumstances and capacities of the various people he addressed; and took every pious means to prepare them for the coming of the long promised Messiah, who was shortly to appear amongst them in the glorious character of a Saviour and Redeemer of Israel.

Thus by a life of inflexible virtue, discourses nervous and pathetic, exhortations sincere and fervent, and rebukes honest and courageous, the Baptist became renowned throughout the whole kingdom of Judea. Indeed, the greater part of his followers were so enraptured with his doctrine and manner of life that they began to consider him as the promised and long expected Messiah; but, to remove all thoughts of this kind, he freely declared to them, that he only baptized them with Water to Repentance and a new life; but that there was one coming, and ready to appear among them, who would baptize them with the effusion of the Holy Ghost, and who so far exceeded him in power and excellency, that he was not worthy to do for him the meanest or most servile office. *I, indeed, baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose,* Luke iii. 16. These were the doctrines which John preached, and this the testimony which he gave of the Blessed Jesus, even before he had the happiness of personally knowing him.

After John had continued in his ministry for several months, our Blessed Lord thought fit to remove from his obscure situation at Nazareth. Accordingly, after taking leave of his parents, he went into Judea, and from thence to Bathabara, on the banks of the river Jordan, where John was at that time baptizing. It is certain that He, who was innocence and purity itself, had no need of the Baptism of Repentance; but Our Blessed Lord, being inclined to honour and sanctify the Institution, offered himself to John for baptism. John, being at this instant Divinely inspired, knew him, and thereupon endeavoured to decline the office, but the Blessed Jesus gave him such reasons for the expediency of

the thing, as made him no longer hesitate; and he immediately baptized him in the presence of numerous spectators.

As Our Blessed Saviour needed not the instructions usually given on the occasion, as soon as the ceremony was performed, he went straightway out of the water, and kneeling on the bank of the river, fervently prayed to his Almighty Father for an abundant effusion of his Holy Spirit, as he was now about to enter upon his public ministry, the end of which was the salvation of mankind. His prayers were heard, his request was granted, and an immediate attestation of the Divine pleasure given. The sky, on a sudden, was divided by a great radiancy, and the Holy Ghost, in the form of a dove, descended upon his sacred head, at which time an audible voice from heaven was heard to pronounce these words: *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

Our Blessed Lord having complied with the Institution of Baptism, and received the most convincing testimony that could be given of his heavenly Father's approbation, by the miraculous descent and effusion of the Holy Ghost upon him, began to prepare himself for the discharge of his prophetic office, he being now arrived at the age of thirty years, which was the time allowed, according to the Mosaic law, for the commencement of inspired ministrations.

As soon as it was known that Our Blessed Saviour was about to enter upon his public ministry, the people in general imagined that he would first repair to Jerusalem, the seat of power and grandeur, in order to display to the great and the learned his miraculous abilities and effulgent glories. But, averse to human parade, the heavenly-minded Jesus preferred solitude to the noise and hurry of mortal life. He therefore retired into the wilderness of Judea, in order to prepare himself, by fasting, meditation and prayer, for the important work on which he was entering, namely, the salvation of mankind.

In this dreary situation the Great Redeemer, as Moses and Elijah had done before him, fasted forty days and forty nights, held an incessant communion with his heavenly Father, digested the doctrine he was about to deliver, and the obedience he came to perform; and by a total abstinence from food for forty days and forty nights evinced the divinity of his mission, or, in other words, proved, that he was *a teacher come from God.*

But the melancholy solitude of a desert, and the sense of hunger and thirst, were but a small part of Our Saviour's sufferings in the wilderness. Satan, that implacable foe to mankind, was permitted to interrupt him with the most insinuating wiles, and assail him with the most alluring temptations. This was an evident display of the Divine wisdom, and, no doubt, permitted that Our Redeemer, being personally acquainted with the artifices of the deceiver, might become a faithful and compassionate high-priest, know how to succour his people in times of adversity, and pity them when they fall into temptation. Indeed, if we consider the matter in its true light, it appears highly proper, in order that our blessed Lord and Master might both enter upon,

and prosecute his ministry, with more glory to himself, and advantage to mankind, that he should previously overcome the most subtle arts of that deceiver, who, under the mask of the serpent, seduced our first parents, and involved them and their posterity in one common ruin.

Whether or not the old serpent made use of any devices to trepan the Son of God during the time of his fasting we cannot say, as no mention is made of it in holy writ. But, at the expiration of the forty days, when the Blessed Jesus had endured the keenest hunger, the tempter, in a haughty and insolent manner, demanded why he bore such sensations; telling him at the same time, that if he was the Son of God he must certainly have power to change even the stones of that dreary wilderness into bread; and that by so marvellous a transmutation he would give him the satisfaction of knowing the truth of what was said concerning him at his baptism. This device Our Blessed Saviour repelled by citing the words of Moses, which implied, that God, whenever it seemed good in his sight, could, by extraordinary means, provide for the support of the human race. *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.*

The deceiver, being defeated in this effort, endeavoured to put in execution another device. Having conducted Our Lord some distance from the spot where he had made the first attempt, he placed him on the pinnacle of a temple, and insolently urged him to prove the truth of his mission, by casting himself down from thence, citing, as an encouragement for him to comply with his desire, the following text from the Psalms: *If thou be the son of God cast thyself down; for it is written, he shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.* This second attempt Our Blessed Saviour frustrated by using these words: *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.* That is, thou shalt not provoke the Lord, either by disobeying his command, or by an impertinent curiosity to know more concerning his will than he is pleased to reveal.

The tempter resolved, if possible, to obtain his ends, hit upon another device, which was to tempt Our Saviour with the charms of ambition. To effect this he conducted him to the top of a very high mountain, where he shewed him a bright view of the kingdoms of the world, with their dazzling glories, promising him universal empire over the whole, if he would bow down, and yield to him the honour of the benefaction. This was such an evidence of blasphemy, as well as insolence, that Our Blessed Lord, exerting his Divine authority, peremptorily commanded him to be gone, but with this memento, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* On his saying these words, Satan, finding all his efforts ineffectual, departed for that time, and an host of angels, sent from heaven, came to Our Saviour, and supplied him with necessary refreshments, after his victory over the great enemy and deceiver of mankind.

During the time of Our Blessed Saviour's fasting and temptation in the wilderness, his faithful forerunner John the Baptist, being assured (both

(both from the descent of the Holy Ghost, and the voice heard from heaven) that Jesus was the true and long expected Messiah; made full and open declarations of it to all the multitude that came to hear him. In consequence of this the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem; prompted by curiosity, sent a deputation of their priests and Levites (who were of the sect of the Pharisees) to demand of him who he was; whether he was the Messiah, or Elias, who was to rise from the dead, and precede the Messiah, the powerful prince so earnestly expected by the whole nation of Israel?

The Baptist very frankly acknowledged that he was not the Messiah whom they expected, nor Elias, who (as they imagined) would personally appear among them, nor any other prophet risen from the dead; but at the same time he gave them to understand, that though he was not Elias himself, yet he was the person spoken of by the prophet Isaiah; and of whom he prophesied in these words: *The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord; Make straight in the desert an highway to our God.* II. xl. 3.

The deputies, not sufficiently satisfied with this reply, asked him why he assumed the power of baptizing the people, if he was neither the Messiah nor Elias, nor any of the antient prophets risen from the dead? In answer to this John told them, that his baptism was only of water, to shew the great necessity of repentance; but that the efficacy of it depended upon one among them, whom they knew not; one who succeeded him, indeed, in time, but so far surpassed him in dignity, that he was not worthy even to be his servant.

With this answer the Pharisees appeared satisfied, and, taking their leave, departed; the very next day after which Our Blessed Lord left the wilderness, and repaired to Bethabara, where John was at that time baptizing, and preaching the doctrine of repentance.

As it was the grand business of the Baptist to direct all persons to the Messiah for life and salvation in and through him, he embraced this seasonable opportunity of pointing him out to the multitude: *Behold* (said he) *the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world!* Having said this, John declared to the people that he was the very person, of whose superiority, both in dignity and existence, he had before spoken, and whom, by certain tokens, he knew to be the Son of God. *I saw,* (said he) *the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record, that this is the Son of God.* John i. 32, &c.

The very next day after the Baptist had made this public declaration, happening to stand on the

bank of the river Jordan with two of his most strenuous followers; and Our Blessed Saviour passing by at the same time; he pointed him out to them; and, in a pious rapture, repeated the words he had made use of the preceding day to the multitude, *Behold the Lamb of God!* Animated with an arduous desire of hearing, as well as seeing, this extraordinary person, they immediately left John, and followed Jesus, who, conscious of their design, turned about, and, with the utmost affability, gave them an invitation to the place of his residence. One of these disciples*, who was named Andrew, had been long a follower of the Baptist, and therefore had not the least doubt of the truth of what he had said, and the doctrine he had propagated; but, after having had some conversation with the Blessed Jesus himself, he was fully satisfied that he was indeed the promised Messiah; the great Saviour and Redeemer of lost mankind.

Andrew, happy in having found out his Divine master, went and discovered it to his elder brother Simon Peter, who, in like manner immediately became one of Our Saviour's disciples. The next day they were joined by two others, namely, one Philip, an inhabitant of the city of Bethsaida, and an intimate friend of his named Nathaniel; a native of Cana in Galilee. The latter, at his very first coming, upon Our Saviour's expressing some tokens of his Omniscience, made a very liberal confession of his knowing him to be the Messiah, the son of God: *Rabbi,* said he, *thou art the Son of God; thou art the king of Israel!*

Nathaniel having made this exclamation, Our Blessed Lord told him, he should hereafter have much stronger testimonies of the divinity of his mission, when he should be an eye-witness to what the old patriarch Jacob had before seen in a vision, the angels *ascending and descending*; to attend the person, and execute the commands of the *Son of Man*. This appellation the Blessed Jesus was pleased to apply not only in consideration of his humanity, but in order more directly to fulfil the remarkable prediction of the prophet Daniel concerning him: *I saw in the night-visions; and behold, one like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the antient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom; that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him. His dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.* Dan. viii. 13, &c.

Our Blessed Redeemer, having attested the divinity of his mission by many incontestible evidences, and made five disciples, left Bethabara, and went into Galilee; where, soon after his arrival, he was invited, together with his mother and followers, to a marriage feast at Cana, a place situated not far from the city of Nazareth.

At

* Though the name of the other disciple is not mentioned, yet there is not the least doubt but it was John, the beloved Apostle and Evangelist, because he so punctually describes the circumstances of the time and conversation that passed;

but in this, and several other places of his Gospel it evidently appears (though for what reason is unknown, unless it was from his great sense of modesty) that he chose to conceal his name.

At the celebration of these nuptials there happened to be a scarcity of wine, and his mother (who interested herself in the management of the feast, and was therefore desirous that every thing should be done with decorum) applied to her son hoping he might be able to remedy the defect.

It is not to be doubted but the holy Mary was thoroughly sensible of her son's supernatural and distinguished powers, and was therefore desirous that he would give some proof of his abilities in the presence of her friends who were assembled at the marriage feast. Addressing herself therefore to her Son, she said, *they have no wine. Our Lord greatly reproofed her in these words: Woman what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come;* meaning, that the time or period, of his public ministry was not yet arrived.

But notwithstanding this reproof, Mary still entertained an opinion that he would interest himself in behalf of her and the company, and therefore ordered the servants punctually to obey his commands.

The Blessed Jesus, being assured that working a miracle would greatly tend to confirm the faith of his young disciples, resolved to comply with the request of his parent. He therefore ordered the servants to fill six pots with water, which was

no sooner done than it was immediately changed into excellent wine. This done, he ordered them to draw, and bear to the governor of the feast, who being ignorant of the miracle that had been wrought, and astonished at the preference of this wine to that which had been served up at the beginning of the feast, addressed himself to the bridegroom in the hearing of the whole company, telling him that, contrary to the usual custom, he had reserved the best wine to the last, at the same time commending so judicious a practice, it being a plain proof of the approbation he entertained of his friends who were present at the entertainment. *Every man (said he) at the beginning doth set forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.* The bridegroom was not less astonished at the address of the governor, than he was at the occasion of it, and all were struck with amazement at a matter which they knew could only have been effected by the most wonderful and supernatural means.

This was the first miracle wrought by Our Blessed Saviour in any public manner, and which proved both a manifestation of his own divinity, and a confirmation of the faith of his disciples.

C H A P. IV.

Our Blessed Saviour goes to Capernaum, and from thence to Jerusalem. Removes the public abuse and prophanation of the temple. Discourses with Nicodemus, a principal person of the Sanhedrim. Baptizes in Judea. John the Baptist is thrown into prison. Our Saviour instructs a poor woman of Samaria. Miraculously cures the son of a Nobleman. Goes to Nazareth, but being ill treated by the people, removes to Capernaum. The wonderful draught of fishes. Our Saviour performs many astonishing cures in Galilee and other parts. He calls Matthew, a rich publican, to be one of his disciples, who immediately leaves his employment, and afterwards becomes an Apostle and Evangelist.

AFTER our Blessed Lord had performed his first miracle at Cana, he went to Capernaum, the place where he afterwards usually resided; but his stay there at this time was not long, because his purpose was to go to Jerusalem, in order to attend the celebration of the Feast of the Passover.

As soon as Our Blessed Saviour arrived at Jerusalem, the first thing he did was, to reform the public abuse and profanation that had crept into the temple, occasioned by the shops which money-changers had set up, and the beasts, which the dealers used to bring into the court of the Gentiles. This Our Lord's zeal for his heavenly Father's honour could not brook; and therefore, with a scourge made of cords, he drove all the sellers and barterers from the sacred ground, overturned the tables of the money-changers, and commanded all those, who dealt in doves and pigeons, to take them immediately

away. *Take these things hence, (said he) Make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.*

This extraordinary procedure greatly incensed the Jews, and a council being assembled, they immediately went to Our Saviour, and demanded of him by what authority he did these things, and to give them some evidence of his having a commission so to do. But to this Our Blessed Saviour made no other reply than by foretelling his own resurrection, which he expressed in the metaphor of the temple. *Destroy, says he, (laying his hand on his breast) this temple, and I will raise it up in three days.* The rulers, mistaking his meaning, imagined that he referred to the superb and lofty temple finished by Herod, and therefore told him such a relation was highly improbable, nor had they the least reason to think he could possibly rebuild, in three days, that magnificent structure, which had been finished

ed at an immense expence, and was the labour of many years.

Our Blessed Saviour did not think proper to explain his meaning to these mighty men among the inhabitants of Jerusalem; upon which, without asking any farther questions, they immediately departed, though far from being satisfied at what they had heard.

During the time of the Passover Our Saviour wrought several miracles in the presence of the common people, in order to confirm the doctrines he delivered, and prove the divinity of his mission. As there had not been any miracles wrought among them for a considerable time, though many were recorded in their sacred books, they beheld Our Blessed Lord with amazement and veneration; and great numbers were satisfied that he was the long promised Messiah, so often foretold by the antient prophets. He did not, however, publicly discover himself to be the Great Prophet, as he knew that the faith of numbers was yet but weak, and that it was likely many would desert his cause when they found he was opposed by the Sanhedrim, or great council of the nation, and did not set up a worldly kingdom as they thought the expected Messiah was to do.

But the miracles wrought by the Blessed Jesus during his stay at Jerusalem did not excite the wonder and astonishment of the common people alone. One Nicodemus (a considerable man in the Sanhedrim, and of the sect of the Pharisees) reflecting on Our Saviour's wondrous works, so astonishing in their nature, so demonstrative in their proof, so salutary in their effect, so happily adapted to the confirmation of his doctrines, and so perfectly agreeable to the attributes of the Deity, as well as the predictions of the antient prophets concerning the Messiah, thought that nothing less than Omnipotence itself could produce such wonders, and that Jesus was, of a truth, the Son of God. But still some scruples arose in his mind when, on the other hand, he considered the obscurity of his birth, and the meanness of his appearance, so different from the exalted notions the Jews always entertained concerning this powerful prince, who (as they thought) was to erect his throne in the mighty city of Jerusalem, and make subject to his dominion all the states and kingdoms of the earth.

Nicodemus, in order to obviate these scruples, and remove these perplexing doubts, resolved on an interview with the Blessed Jesus; but chusing to conceal his visit from the other members of the Sanhedrim, who were greatly averse both to his person and doctrine, he chose the night as being most convenient for answering his purpose. As soon as he beheld the mighty Redeemer of Israel, he saluted him in these words: *Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.* Which was as much as to say, "Rabbi, I am sufficiently convinced that thou art immediately sent as a teacher from on high; for nothing less than power divine could enable thee to perform the miracles which thou hast wrought in the presence of multitudes."

Our Blessed Saviour told Nicodemus that his belief was not the only qualification requisite for him to become his disciple; and then pro-

ceeded to instruct him in the great mystery of Regeneration; *Verily, verily, (said he) I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* Which was as much as to say, *Verily, verily, I declare unto thee as a truth of the last importance, that unless a man be regenerated in the spirit of his mind, have his will and affections transferred from earthly to spiritual objects, he cannot see the kingdom of God, which is holy and spiritual, both in its nature and enjoyments.*

This was a mysterious system to Nicodemus, whose religious views extended no farther than rites and ceremonies, and were bounded by time and space: besides, he thought the very position of our Lord an absurdity in terms: *How (said he) can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?*

To these questions Our Blessed Redeemer replied, *Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* The regeneration which I preach unto you is not of a natural, but of a spiritual, nature. Unless a man embraces the religion and doctrine I preach (whose initiating ordinance is baptism and Divine Grace) he cannot be the subject of Divine glory, which consists not in earthly splendor, and the gratification of the meaner passions, but in an exemption from whatever is earthly, sensual and devilish, and the prosecution of whatever is heavenly, holy and spiritual. *That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again.* The doctrine I preach is designed to inform you, first, that you derive no excellence from your boasted descent from Abraham, being as such subject to sins and infirmities of every kind; and secondly, to shew that you must undergo a spiritual mortal regeneration, a renovation of the heart, which changes the whole man, and fits him for the participation of heavenly blessedness. This important work is likewise spiritual in its operation, unseen by mortal eyes, being wrought on the mind or heart of man by the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, which changes its nature, and, with respect to things eternal, makes him another, a new creature. *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

Having said this, Our Blessed Saviour proceeds to tell Nicodemus that the doctrine of Regeneration was no more, in respect of other mysteries of the Gospel, than the earth is in comparison of the heavens, and then acquaints him with several matters of the most sublime nature, but particularly the blessing of that Redemption which he came into the world to accomplish. He instructs him in the Love of the Father, the Mission of the Son, the Rewards of Faith, and the Glories of Eternity. He upbraids the unbelieving and impenitent, and declares the difference between a pure and corrupt conscience, the shame and fears of the one, and the confidence and serenity of the other.

This is the substance of Our Blessed Saviour's Discourse to Nicodemus, who, in consequence thereof, became a convert, and ever after con-

stantly espoused his cause in the great council of the nation.

As soon as the Feast of the Passover was ended, Our Blessed Lord, accompanied by his disciples, left Jerusalem, and retired into the remote parts of Judea, where he continued a considerable time, preaching the kingdom of God. In every place where he went he made many proselytes, whom he principally caused to be baptized by the hands of his disciples, his own time being chiefly taken up in teaching the people, and relieving their necessities.

At this time John the Baptist had removed his station from Bethabara to Ænon, a place remarkable for springs and various currents of water, and therefore of great convenience for performing the ceremonies of baptism. While he was here, a dispute arose between his followers and certain Jews who were present, which of the Baptisms, that of John, or that of Jesus, was to be preferred? Being unable to decide the dispute among themselves, they referred it to the opinion of John, who told them, that the person, of whom he had given such honourable testimony, received proselytes (and that in prodigious numbers) by the same ceremony of Baptism as he did. He then repeated the testimony he had before given of his Divine master, and reminded his followers how frequently he had told them, that the person of whom they spake was the Messiah, whom God had sent into the world for the salvation of mankind, and himself no more than his herald; and that his ministry, therefore, was now going to decline, even as, upon the approach of the sun, the glory of the morning star decreased. John said many other things of the like nature to prove Our Blessed Saviour to be the Son of God, and concluded his harangue with these important words: *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not on the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

The Baptist, having publicly preached the great doctrine of salvation throughout the wilderness of Judea, where he had continued a considerable time, departed from thence, and went into the territories of Herod Antipas in Galilee. As Herod esteemed both his preaching and person, John frequently went to his court, and having naturally a great freedom of speech, as well as being desirous of faithfully discharging his ministry, he one day reprov'd Herod for his wicked course of life, and particularly for his cohabiting with Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, who was still living. Herod, being weak enough to inform Herodias of what John had said, she was exasperated against him to such a degree that, though Herod had some esteem and reverence for him, yet, from her malicious insinuations, she prevailed on Herod to put John into prison, intending, no doubt, when a convenient opportunity should offer, to have him destroyed.

During these transactions in Galilee, Our Blessed Lord continued preaching and baptizing in the wilderness of Judea. But understanding that the Pharisees began to be envious of him on account of the great numbers of people that resorted to him, he resolved to leave that part of the country, and pass into Galilee, in order

to enter upon the more solemn part of his ministerial function. In the course of his journey it was necessary for him to pass through Samaria; and as he travelled on foot, and the weather was exceeding hot, when he came within a small distance of Shechem, he sent his disciples into the city to buy provisions, and sat himself down by the side of a famous spring called Jacob's Well.

After Our Blessed Lord had sat a short time by the well side, there came a woman of a loose life and conversation from the city with a pitcher to draw water. As soon as Our Lord saw her, he requested of her to give him to drink; upon which the woman perceiving him to be a Jew, asked him how he could make any such request to a Samaritan, since there were such great feuds, and so little dealings, between them and the Jews? Little did the woman know the excellency of the person who asked her so small a favour; but, in some measure to convince her, Our Lord took occasion from hence, under the metaphor of water, to discourse with her on spiritual blessings, and to make her sensible of his Omnipotence. He told her, "That all who drank of the water of Jacob's Well would thirst again, being but a temporal allay of a desire incident to human nature; whereas those who drank of the water which he was ready to dispense, should never thirst because that water flowed from the inexhaustible fountain of Divine Grace." He then reminded her of some remarkable incidents that had occurred to her in the course of her life, particularly of her having been five times divorced for adultery, and that she at that very time lived in a state of fornication.

These undeniable truths greatly alarmed the woman, who, to evade the present subject of discourse, which filled her with a degree of awe and fear, as supposing he could be no less than a prophet, propounded to him a question which had afforded great controversy between the Jews and Samaritans, viz. Which was the proper place of public worship, Mount Gerezim, or Jerusalem? To this Our Blessed Lord replied, that it was not the place, but the manner, in which adoration was offered to the Father of Spirits, that rendered religious worship acceptable; telling her likewise, that the time was approaching when all sacrifices, and ceremonial rites, should cease, and when God, who was a Spirit, would be worshipped in a more humble and spiritual manner than he had hitherto been.

In consequence of this answer, which apparently referred to things spiritual and eternal, the woman informed the Blessed Jesus of her expectation of the arrival of the promised Messiah, who would punctually satisfy them with respect to those things which had been so long and undecisively contested. Our Blessed Lord, being now pleased to make himself known to her, replied, *I that speak unto thee am he.* This intelligence greatly astonished the woman, who immediately left her pitcher, and ran into the city to publish to the people the glad tidings, that the great deliverer of mankind was then sitting by the side of Jacob's Well.

Just as Our Blessed Saviour had made himself known to the woman, and she had departed from the

the spot, his disciples returned from the city, and immediately sat before their master the provision they had purchased; but he, wholly absorbed in meditation, refused the refreshment they had brought, telling them, *he had meat to eat that they knew nothing of.* This unexpected answer surprized his disciples, who, taking his words in a literal sense, thought some person or other had, during their absence, supplied him with provisions. But Our Blessed Lord soon explained the mystery, by telling them, that he did not mean natural, but spiritual food; that, to execute the commission he had received from his Father was far better than meat or drink; and the satisfaction he was going to receive from the conversion of the Samaritans much greater than any sensual enjoyment.

In the mean time the woman, having returned to the city, proclaimed aloud that she had met with a person who had told her all the secrets of her life, and that he could be no other (as he had told her himself) than the long promised Messiah. This report astonished the Samaritans, and, at the same time, roused their curiosity to see a person foretold by Moses and the prophets, and of whose appearance there was then so universal an expectation. Accordingly, great numbers of them repaired to Jacob's Well, and no sooner did they see Our Blessed Saviour than, being fully persuaded that he could be no other person than the great Messiah, the first request they made was, that he would deign to take up his residence in their city. Our Lord so far complied with their request as to continue with them two days, an interval which he spent in preaching to them the kingdom of God; so that the greater part of the people embraced the doctrine of the Gospel, and, at his departure, said unto the woman, *Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.*

From Shechem Our Blessed Lord proceeded to Cana, where he changed the water into wine, and where the Galileans (who, at the Passover, had seen the miracles which he did at Jerusalem) received him with the greatest respect and reverence. During his stay here, a nobleman of Capernaum came, and addressed himself to him with great humility, desiring that he would be pleased to go thither, and heal his son, who was then just at the point of death. Our Blessed Saviour readily complied with the latter part of his request; but to remove a prejudice which had been conceived that it was necessary for him to be personally present in order to restore the sick person to health, as well as to shew the great excellence of his power, he refused to go to Capernaum, and therefore dismissed the nobleman with assurance that his son was restored to health: *Go thy way; (said he) thy son liveth.* As the believing father was joyfully returning home, he was met on the way by some of his servants, who congratulated him with the welcome news of his son's recovery. In consequence of this he required of them the hour when the child began to mend; and by the answer they gave him he perceived that it was at the very instant, when Our Lord had declared to him, *thy son liveth.*

Whereupon not only the nobleman, but likewise his whole family, being convinced of Our Saviour's divinity, became converts to the Christian faith.

After Our Blessed Saviour had spent some days in the city and neighbourhood of Cana, he went to Nazareth, the place where he received his education, and where he had resided till he came to years of maturity. On the sabbath-day he went as was his constant custom, into the synagogue, and, standing up, read (as it was usual for lay-men then to do) a passage in the prophet Isaiah, beginning with these words: *The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the Poor, &c.* He spoke on this subject with so much gracefulness as to attract, in a very particular manner, the attention of the whole congregation. Many of them admired his discourse, but the greater part, who had known him in his youth, and the manner in which he had been brought up by his parents, treated it with disrespect, and contemptuously intimated the insignificant light in which they looked upon him, on account of the meanness of his extract, as if he had been no more than a carpenter's son. On this Our Blessed Lord took occasion to upbraid them with their ingratitude and insensibility, upon which they were so provoked, that they hurried him out of the synagogue, and took him to the brow of a hill on which the city was built, with a design to have him thrown down from thence, and destroy him, which they would certainly have done, had he not, by a miraculous power, imperceptibly withdrawn himself from them, and quitted their city.

In consequence of this ill treatment from the Nazarenes, Our Blessed Saviour took up his residence at Capernaum, the capital of Galilee, which, from its being built on the borders of the lake Genesareth, was a place highly convenient for his designs. For, besides the numerous inhabitants of that city, the trading towns on the lake were crowded with people, who, after hearing the doctrine of the Gospel preached by the great Redeemer of mankind, could not fail to spread, in their respective countries, the happy tidings of salvation.

Our Blessed Saviour had not been long at Capernaum before his great fame was spread throughout the adjacent country, and multitudes of people flocked daily to see him and hear his doctrine. As he was one day walking by the side of a lake, surrounded by a croud of people, he saw two fishing vessels, one belonging to Peter and the other James and John (who were all partners and companions in that business) and, stepping into Peter's ship, he desired him to put a little from the shore, that from thence he might preach to the multitude.

As soon as Our Blessed Saviour had concluded his discourse, he turned himself to Peter, desiring him to launch his vessel farther from the shore, and let down his net. Peter modestly told him that he and his companions had been toiling all the night without meeting with any success; but nevertheless, in obedience to him, he would make one trial more. This he accordingly did, and such was the success attending it

it that they were obliged to call to their partners in the other ship to come to their assistance in drawing up the nets, which being done they contained such a multitude of fishes as to load both vessels, and that so deep that they were in some danger of sinking before they could reach the shore.

This wonderful success so astonished Peter, that, falling down at the feet of the Blessed Jesus, he cried out, *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.* He was conscious of the many sins he had committed, and therefore afraid of being in the company of so Divine a person, lest some infirmity or offence might have subjected him to more than ordinary chastisement. But Our Blessed Saviour soon removed his fears, by bidding him be of good comfort; telling him at the same time, that he had a much better work and employment for him, if he would attach himself to him, namely, *the gaining of mens souls to salvation.* Our Lord then gave the like invitation to James and John, both of whom obeyed his call, and, leaving their vessels, nets, relations and employment, became, and continued ever after, his constant and inseparable disciples.

After the performance of this miracle Our Blessed Saviour returned with his new disciples into the city, and on the next sabbath-day went into the chief synagogue to preach to the people. This he did with such gracefulness, and in a manner so widely different from their usual teachers the Scribes, that all were astonished at him. To increase their astonishment, one of the congregation, whose body was possessed with an unclean spirit, hideously cried out, *Let us alone, what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.* But Jesus, who wanted not the testimony of any such confessors, commanded the evil spirit to be silent, and depart out of the poor man's body, which, to the great surprize and amazement of the whole congregation, was immediately effected.

Our Blessed Saviour, after having performed this astonishing miracle in the synagogue, retired to Peter's house, where his wife's mother at that time lay sick of a fever; but on his taking her by the hand she was immediately restored to her former health, and arose from the bed, and ministered unto him.

The fame of this miracle, together with that performed in the synagogue, was soon spread throughout the city of Capernaum; and as soon as the sabbath was over, which ended at the setting of the sun, the people of the city gathered together, in prodigious multitudes, about Peter's house. Among them were great numbers afflicted with various diseases, the sight of whom excited the pity of the heavenly physician, who, in the presence of the whole assembly, immediately healed them of their respective complaints, either by a touch of his finger, or a gentle pressure of his hand.

The prodigious concourse of people which continued to surround Peter's house, greatly disturbed Our Lord, so that to avoid their noise and importunities, as well as to have the opportunity

of praying to his heavenly Father, he, early the next morning, left Capernaum, and retired to a private place in the adjoining wilderness. But even in this solitude he was soon found out; and therefore, to disengage himself from such a crowd of attendants, as well as to discharge his mission by the circulation of his doctrine, he, accompanied by his disciples, privately left the place, and made a progress into Galilee, preaching in all the public synagogues in his way, and curing all such as applied to him of their respective diseases.

In one of the cities of Galilee through which Our Blessed Saviour passed he was met by a man afflicted with a leprosy, who immediately fell on his face, and besought him, saying, *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.* It was the custom in Judea for the priests to banish from society those persons who were afflicted with a contagious species of leprosy. The disease, therefore, of this person was of a less pestilent kind, as he was suffered to enjoy the conversation of men. His case, however, excited the pity of the compassionate Jesus, who, with one touch, immediately healed him, but at the same time gave him a strict charge not to discover it to any one till he had presented himself before the priest in the temple at Jerusalem, and had offered a sacrifice in testimony of the great benefit he had received. But the poor man, from the great abundance of his joy, could not refrain from publishing, in every place through which he passed, the wonderful miracle which had been performed upon him. This increased Our Saviour's fame to such a degree, that he thought it most adviseable not to return openly into the city of Capernaum, lest the multitude of his followers should give some umbrage to the state; and therefore having finished his progress through Galilee (which lasted near three months) he retired into a desert place, in order to refresh his body with rest, and his spirit with prayer and meditation.

After Our Blessed Lord had been some time in this state of retirement, he left it, and went privately into Capernaum. It was not, however, long, before he was discovered, the consequence of which was, that such throngs of people gathered together from all parts, that the house where he was, and all the court-yard about it, were not sufficient to contain them. Within the house were many Pharisees and Doctors of the law from Jerusalem and Judea, as well as Galilee, who, led thither by curiosity, sat day after day hearing his discourses, and observing the miracles he performed, which were of so wonderful a nature as, it might have been reasonably imagined, would have effectually removed every doubt and scruple they could have possibly entertained relative to the truth of his mission.

Among other instances Our Blessed Saviour gave at this time of his Divine power was that of restoring a man to perfect health, who had long been afflicted with the palsy, and was reduced by that terrible disease to the most melancholy condition. This miserable object was carried in his bed by four persons, who being unable to enter at the front, conveyed him to the top of the house;

house*, and by means of ropes let him down thro' the trap-door into the midst of the company before Jesus, who, seeing the faith of the friends of the diseased, had immediate compassion on him; saying aloud, *Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.* The haughty Scribes and Pharisees, taking offence at this expression, called out, *this man speaketh blasphemy, for he appropriates that to himself, which is solely the property of God.* They were ignorant that the person who uttered such healing words was the Son of God, and consequently had the power of forgiving the sins of the human race. But Our Lord who had recourse to the most secret recesses of the heart, and was willing to shew them that he was really endued with the Spirit of God, said to them, *Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether it is easier to say to the sick of the palsy, thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed and walk?* This was a question that could only be resolved of the latter, it being doubtless easier to forgive sin than remit that which is inflicted as its punishment. But these incorrigible mortals held their peace; and the Blessed Jesus only added, that the miracles he was going to perform would sufficiently demonstrate, that he had not usurped what did not, in the strictest manner, belong to him. And turning himself from these bigotted teachers of Israel towards the sick of the palsy, he said unto him, *Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thine own house.* No sooner was this Divine mandate given than the sick man was restored to his former health and strength; and, to the astonishment of all present arose, took up his bed, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. The whole congregation (the Scribes and Pharisees excepted) being convinced by their eyes of the efficacy of Our Saviour's last words, were perfectly satisfied that he had also the power of forgiving sins; they then glorified God who had manifested such power on earth, and being filled with reverential fear, declared, *they had that day seen strange and wonderful things.*

After Our Blessed Saviour had wrought this miracle, he repaired to the sea-side, and there preached to a prodigious concourse of people. When his discourse was ended he returned to the city, in his way to which seeing one Matthew (otherwise named Levi) a rich publican, sitting at the door of the receipt of customs, he said unto him, *Follow me.* Matthew readily obeyed the Divine summons, immediately forsook his gainful employment, and afterwards became both an Apostle and Evangelist.

A few days after Matthew's conversion he

invited Our Blessed Saviour and his disciples to a feast, and, among others, all he knew of the profession which he had forsook, hoping that the latter, by hearing the heavenly conversation of Christ, might also repent, and embrace the doctrine of the Gospel. The Scribes and Pharisees, who accounted all in a manner sinners, except themselves, (but more especially the publicans) were highly offended that so many of them should be present; and asked Our Saviour's disciples, how it came to pass that their master, who set himself up for a preacher of righteousness, and a reformer of others, came to be so intimate with those lewd and lost wretches, as to sit and eat with them at the same table? Our Saviour, hearing this artful question, told the Scribes and Pharisees that the sick only had need of a physician, and desired them to reflect seriously on the prophet Hosea's declaration: *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.* The turning sinners into the paths of righteousness is far more acceptable to God than all the ceremonies of the law of Moses, so highly magnified by your fraternity, who, on many occasions, observe them at the expence of charity; adding, *I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

However, satisfactory this answer might have been to an unprejudiced person, it was far from being so to the Scribes and Pharisees, who demanded of Our Saviour, why his disciples wholly neglected to fast, a duty often performed both by the rulers of Israel, and the disciples of John? In reply to this the Blessed Jesus told them, it was not a proper season for the friends of the bridegroom to fast and afflict themselves while they enjoyed his company: *but (said he) the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they shall fast.* As if he had said, "I am the Bridegroom, and my church is my Bride: as long as I am here the marriage-feast continues, and my disciples are the children or friends of the Bridegroom, and therefore are not to mourn, but to rejoice with me, while the time lasts: But, at my death and departure, this bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then it will be time for them to fast and to mourn." Our Lord farther told them that it would be as imprudent and preposterous a thing to impose rigorous austerities on his disciples (at a time when he was employing them to preach the gospel) as it would be to sew a piece of new cloth upon a rotten garment, which, upon any stress, would make the rent worse: or to put new wine into old leather bottles, which, upon the least fermentation, would both burst the bottles, and destroy the liquor. He then concluded his reply with

* It is here to be observed that the houses in Judea were for the most part (as they are even at this day) low built, flat roofed, and surrounded with a battlement about breast-high, according to the direction given by Moses, Deut. xxii. 8. so that to go up to the tops of their houses, the Jews had two ways; one, by a pair of stairs *within* the house, leading up to the trap-door, which lay even with the roof; and the other on the *outside* of the house, by a ladder, or rather pair of stairs, either fixed or moveable, by which they could ascend to the roof when they pleased, without going into the house itself. Since then this was the fashion of Jewish hou-

ses, the bearers of the sick man, finding they could not get at the door by reason of the crowd, went round a private way, and coming to the stairs which stood on the outside of the house, ascended them, and gained the top; but finding the trap-door (or, as the Jews call it, *way of the roof*) shut against them, they immediately went to work, and forcing it open (which St. Mark calls *uncovering* or *breaking up the roof*) they conveyed the sick man lying on his bed into the room where Our Blessed Saviour was then expounding the doctrine of the Gospel to the people.

an observation on the great prevalence of custom: *None (said he) having drank old wine desireth new; for he saith, the old is better.*

These arguments, however, were far from

being satisfactory to the Scribes and Pharisees, who, not thinking proper to ask any farther questions, at this time, took their leave and departed.

C H A P. V.

Our Blessed Lord goes to Jerusalem, and performs a miraculous cure at the pool of Bethesda. He reproves the Jews for their superstition, in condemning the performance of necessary works on the sabbath-day. Vindicates his disciples for eating ears of corn on the sabbath, and himself for curing a man on the same day of a withered hand. The Pharisees conspire against his life; upon which he retires with his disciples towards the sea-side, and, in his way, cures a great number of diseased people. He rebuses his twelve apostles, and preaches to a numerous audience his excellent and well known sermon on the Mount.

THE feast of the Passover being near at hand, Our Blessed Saviour repaired to Jerusalem, whither he had no sooner arrived than he went to the public bath or pool, called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, that is, *the house of mercy*, on account of the miracles wrought there, by the salutary effects of the water, at certain seasons. This bath was surrounded with five porches, or cloisters, in which those who frequented the place were sheltered both from the heat and cold; and were particularly serviceable to the diseased and infirm, who crowded thither to find relief in their afflictions. These porches were at this time filled with "a great number of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water: and whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had." John v. 3, 4.

At what period of time this miraculous effect of the water took place cannot be determined; but it is almost universally agreed that it could not be long before the coming of Our Saviour. The gift of prophecy and of miracles had ceased among the Jews for many years; and therefore to raise in them a more ardent desire for the coming of the Messiah, and to induce them to be more circumspect in observing the signs of his coming, God was pleased to favour them with this remarkable sign at Bethesda.

The pool was situated near the gate of victims, which were figures of the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, that they might be convinced God had yet a regard for the posterity of Abraham, and the worship which he himself had established; and might thus support themselves with the pleasing hope of the coming of the Messiah, the great fulfiller of the covenant, to his temple. And as this miracle of the angel descending from heaven began when the coming of the Messiah was at hand, to advise them of the speedy and near approach of that promised salvation; so Christ entered these porches, which were situated without the temple, and performed a most astonishing miracle, to indicate what was the true intent of this gift of healing, namely, to lead

men to himself, who was *the fountain opened for the removal of all sin and uncleanness.*

Among the wretched objects that filled the porches of Bethesda at the time Our Blessed Saviour visited it, (which was on the sabbath-day) was a poor paralytick, who had laboured under his infirmity thirty-eight years. The length and greatness of this man's affliction, which were well known to the Son of God, were sufficient to excite his tender compassion, and make this long wretched being the happy object to demonstrate that his power of healing was infinitely superior to the salutary virtue of the water. Our Blessed Lord, approaching the man whom he had singled out as the person on whom to manifest his power, asked him whether he was desirous of being made whole? A question, which must induce the man to declare publicly his melancholy case in the hearing of the multitude, and, consequently, render the miracle more conspicuous. The wretched mortal, looking, with a sorrowful countenance up to the Blessed Redeemer, and understanding that he meant his being healed by the virtue of the water, answered, *Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming down, another steppeth down before me.* The compassionate Jesus, however, soon convinced him that he was not to owe his cure to the salutary nature of the waters, but to the unbounded power of the Son of God; and accordingly he said unto him, *Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.* Nor was the heavenly mandate any sooner uttered, than it took effect: the impotent man, to the astonishment of the whole multitude, *was made whole, and took up his bed and walked.*

This astonishing miracle could not fail of having a proper effect on the minds of the spectators; and the poor man carrying his bed on the sabbath-day, which the Jews considered as a profanation of that day of rest, tended greatly to spread the fame of the miracle over the whole city. Nor did the man hesitate obeying the commands of his Divine physician: he was conscious in himself that the person who had the power of working such miracles must be a prophet,

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



JOHN, V. 9.

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR *curing the* IMPOTENT MAN
at the pool of Bethesda.

phet, and, consequently, that his injunctions could not be sinful. When, therefore, many of the Jews told him it was not lawful to carry his bed on the sabbath-day, the answer he made was, *He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walk.* He that restored my strength in an instant, and removed, with a single word a disease that had many years afflicted me, commanded me at the same time, to take up my bed and walk; and surely a person possessed of such power would not have ordered me to do any thing but what was strictly right.

A short time after Our Blessed Saviour had performed this miracle he was met in the temple by the very man he had healed; and thereupon took the opportunity of reminding him, that as he was now freed from an infirmity he had brought on himself by irregular courses, he should be careful to abstain from them for the future, lest an affliction should fall on him of a more dreadful nature. The man, overjoyed at having found the Divine physician, who had relieved him from his wretched and melancholy state, ran to the Scribes and Pharisees, and, with a heart overflowing with gratitude, told them it was Jesus who had performed on him so astonishing a cure, imagining, no doubt, but they would rejoice at beholding the person who had performed so great a miracle. But, alas! this was far from being the case: instead of being pleased with the account they received of his wondrous mercy and kindness, they tumultuously seized him in the temple, and immediately took him before the Sanhedrim, with a design to take away his life as an open prophaner of the Sabbath.

After the Scribes and Pharisees had laid their accusation before the Sanhedrim, Our Blessed Saviour vindicated himself in words to this effect: "That, since God (from whose rest they took the observation of the Sabbath) did, on that day, and all others, exercise the works of Providence, Preservation, and Mercy, there could be no reason why he, who was his son, and invested with full authority from him, might not employ himself on the Sabbath, as well as any other day, in actions of the like nature."

But the Jewish prejudice could not be overcome by argument. Instead thereof it only increased their malice, and they now accused him not only of being a Sabbath-breaker, but likewise a blasphemer, in having asserted that he was the Son of God, and co-equal with him. In answer to this Our Blessed Saviour told them that he acted agreeable to the will of God, and did whatsoever he saw done by his Father. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.* John v. 19. 20.

Though nothing could more fully evince the character of Our Lord than these assertions, yet he did not require his hearers to believe them merely on his own testimony: he appealed to that of John, who was a burning and a shining

light, and in whom, for a time, they greatly rejoiced, because the prophetic spirit, which had so long ceased in Israel, was revived in that holy man. Nay, he appealed to a much greater testimony than that of John; even that of the God of Jacob himself who was continually bearing witness to the truth of his mission, by the many miracles he empowered him to perform; and, who, at his baptism, had, in an audible voice from the courts of heaven, declared him to be his beloved Son; a voice which multitudes of people had heard, and, probably, even some of those to whom he was then speaking.

The Jews had long expected the coming of the Messiah; but they had expected him to appear as a temporal prince, who would not only restore the former lustre of the throne of David, but infinitely augment it, and even place it over all the kingdoms of the earth. And hence they were unwilling to acknowledge Jesus for the Messiah notwithstanding the proofs of his mission were so undeniable, because they must, in so doing, have abandoned all their grand ideas of a temporal kingdom. Our Blessed Saviour, therefore, desired them to consult their own scriptures, particularly the writings of the prophets, where they would find the character of the Messiah so visibly displayed, as would convince them they were all fulfilled in his person. He likewise gave them to understand, that the proofs of his mission were as full and clear as possible, being supported by the actions of his life, which, in all things, agreed with his doctrine: for he never sought the applause of men, or affected secular power, but was always inoffensive and humble, though he well knew that these virtues made him appear little in the eyes of those who had no idea of a spiritual kingdom, but expected the Messiah would appear in all the pomp of secular authority. He concluded by telling them, that he himself would not be their accuser to the God of Jacob for their infidelity, but that Moses, their great legislator, in whom they trusted, would join in that unwelcome office; for by denying him to be the Messiah, they denied the writings of that prophet. *Had ye (said he) believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me: but if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?*

What the result of Our Saviour's defence before the Sanhedrim was we cannot tell, because none of the Evangelists have acquainted us; but the sequel of the history informs us, that it no ways abated the malice of the Pharisees; for, on the very next sabbath-day, upon his disciples plucking a few ears of corn as they passed through the fields, and (from mere hunger) eating the grain after rubbing it out in their hands, they began again to clamour against this violation of the Sabbath. But Our Blessed Saviour soon convinced them of their error, by shewing, both from the example of David, and the constant practice of their own priests (who never omitted the necessary works of the temple on the sabbath-day) "that works of necessity were sometimes permitted, even to the breach of a ritual command: that acts of mercy were the best and most acceptable method of serving God upon any day whatever: that it was inverting the order

“ order of things to suppose, that *man was made for the Sabbath, and not the Sabbath for the benefit of man*: but, even if it were not so, that he, as the Son of God, and, consequently, *Lord of the Sabbath*, had a power to dispense with the *ceremonial laws* concerning it.” Thus did Our Blessed Saviour prove, that works of mercy should not be left undone, though attended with the violation of some of the Mosaic institutions.

A short time after Our Blessed Saviour had this dispute with the Scribes and Pharisees, he went, on the sabbath-day, into one of the synagogues at Jerusalem; and while he was preaching to the people, there stood before him a man whose right hand was shrunk and withered. The Pharisees, observing the compassionate Jesus advancing towards the man, did not doubt but he would attempt to heal him; and, therefore, watched him attentively, that they might have something to accuse him with to the people. The Saviour of the world was not unapprized of their malicious intentions. He knew their designs were to exercise every art they were masters of in order to put him to death. But, defying their impotent power, he bade the man stand up in the midst of the assembly as an object of public commiseration, and, turning himself to these superstitious observers of the sabbath, put the question to them, whether *they thought it lawful, on the sabbath-day, to do good, or ill; actually to save life, or negligently to destroy it?* As if he had said, “Is it not more lawful for me, on the sabbath-day, to save men’s lives, than for you to seek my death, without the least provocation?”

The force of this question was so great, and the arguments so undeniable, that they could not make any answer, and therefore pretended not to understand his meaning. On this Our Blessed Saviour made use of an argument which stupidity itself could not fail of understanding, and which these hypocritical sophists, with all their arts, were unable to answer. *What man (said the Blessed Jesus) shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath-day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath-day.* Matt. xii, 11, 12.

In answer to the former question the Pharisees only said that they did not understand Our Lord’s meaning, but the last argument effectually silenced them, though they were determined not to be convinced. This unconquerable obstinacy greatly displeased the humble Jesus, who, looking at them with some marks of anger for their perverseness, commanded the poor man to stretch out his hand, which he had no sooner done, than it was restored whole as the other.—This astonishing miracle performed in the midst of a congregation, many of whom, doubtless, knew the man while he laboured under his infirmity, and in the presence of some of his most inveterate enemies, must certainly have had a great effect on the minds of the people, more especially as they saw that it had effectually silenced the Pharisees, who had not any thing to offer either against the miracle itself, or the reasonings and power of him who had performed it.

But though the Pharisees were silenced by Our Blessed Saviour’s arguments, and astonished at his miracles, yet they were so far from abandoning their malicious intentions, that they joined in consultation with the Herodians (though a sect quite opposite to them in principles) how they might take away his life, thinking, that if he continued his preaching, and working of miracles, the people would wholly follow him, and their own power would soon become not only insignificant, but also contemptible.

The Blessed Jesus, knowing the evil intentions of his enemies, left Jerusalem, and retired with his disciples, towards the sea-side; but which way soever he went, his name was now grown so famous, that prodigious multitudes, not only out of Galilee, but also from Jerusalem, from the provinces of Judea and Idumæa, and all the country about Jordan, as far as the Mediterranean Sea; to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, hearing of his miraculous power in curing all diseases either with a word from his mouth, the touch of his hand, or barely the touch of his garment, came with their sick and possessed for help, and, as fast as they came, he cured them. Nay, to such a degree was his fame increased, that the very unclean spirits publicly confessed that he was the Son of God, till upon all occasions, they were restrained, and compelled to silence.

Our Blessed Saviour, finding great inconvenience in the numbers of people that came to him for relief, retired to a solitary mountain, where he continued all night in prayer, intending, the next morning, to make an election of some particular persons, who, after his departure out of this world, were to be his vicegerents upon earth, founders of his church, and propagators of his gospel.

Having spent the whole night in this pious exercise, Our Blessed Redeemer lost no time in putting his beneficent design into execution; for no sooner had darkness withdrawn her sable veil, and the blushing rays of the morning adorned the chambers of the east, than the benevolent Redeemer of mankind called his disciples to him, and chose twelve, whom he ordered to be constantly with him, that they might learn from his own mouth the doctrines they were to preach to the whole world; that they might see his glory, the transcendent glory of the virtues which adorned his human life; and that they might be witnesses of all the wondrous works he should perform during his residence on earth, and by which his mission from the courts of heaven was to be fully demonstrated.

The names of the twelve disciples whom Our Blessed Saviour selected from the rest were as follow:

- Simon (who is likewise named Peter) and Andrew.
- James (commonly called the Great) and John.
- Philip and Bartholomew.
- Matthew and Thomas.
- James (commonly called the Less) and Simon the Canaanite.
- Judas, the Brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, who afterwards so justly deserved the title of Traytor.

After

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



CHRIST healing the SICK and casting out
DEVILS.

After Our Blessed Saviour had made choice of these twelve disciples (to whom he gave the name of Apostles) perceiving the multitude gather round him, he called them nearer to him than the rest, and then preached to the people that most excellent discourse commonly called the *Sermon on the Mount*; the substance of which is to the following effect.

The subject with which Our Blessed Lord opened this inimitable discourse was that of happiness. He told his hearers that the highest happiness of men consisted in the graces of the Spirit, because, from the possession and exercise of them, the purest pleasures resulted; pleasures which satisfied even the Almighty himself. The rich, the great, the proud (said the great Redeemer of Mankind) are not happy, as you imagine; they are always wishing for what they cannot obtain; and their disappointments are poisoned arrows festering in their breasts. On the contrary, the poor in spirit, who discharge the duties of their station, whatever it be, with virtue and integrity, are the truly happy: they bless the Omnipotent hand that guards them from all dangers in this humble vale of sorrow and distress; and though they are excluded from enjoying an earthly kingdom, yet they have a much better reserved for them, eternal in the heavens. *Blessed are the poor in Spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Nor are the jocular and flighty to be placed among the happy race of mortals; but on the contrary the afflicted, provided they rightly improve their afflictions; that is, if they are excited by them to mourn for their sins, and forsake their wicked courses. In this case, they shall here enjoy the consolation that their sins will be forgiven, and, after passing through the valley of the shadow of death, the fruition of eternal joys. *Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.* The truth of this heavenly aphorism is very evident; for what has so great a power to turn the feet of the sons of men into the path of virtue as affliction? Has not affliction a natural tendency to give mankind a distaste to the pleasures of the world, and convince them they are nothing more than *vanity and vexation of spirit*? Affliction awakens the most serious thoughts in the mind; composes it into a grave and settled frame, very different from that levity which is occasioned by prosperity; gives it a fellow-feeling of the sorrows of others; and makes it thoroughly sensible of the danger of departing from God, the source and center of all its joys.

Nor are the passionate happy, but, on the contrary, the meek and humble: those who have subdued their tempers can patiently bear provocation, and are strangers to that destructive passion, envy. The meek shall inherit the choicest blessings of this life; for, indeed, they principally flow from that benevolent and heavenly temper of mind. Meekness consists in the moderation of our passions, which renders a person lovely in the eyes of his fellow-mortals, and thence he possesses their sincere esteem; while the passionate and envious man is considered as despicable, though adorned with the robe of honour, and dignified with the most ample profes-

sions. *Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.*

Men, through vanity and blindness, consider those happy who enjoy the pleasures of this life by rioting in luxury and excess. But this is far from being the case: on the contrary, those are the truly happy who have the most vehement desire of treading in the paths of virtue and religion. Such, by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, shall obtain every thing they desire: they shall be happy here in the practice of righteousness, and, after this transitory life is ended, shall be received into the blissful mansions of the heavenly Canaan. *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.*

The forgiveness of injuries, not the resenting them, is a spring of happiness. The man who is of a humane and beneficent disposition will rejoice when he can perform a benevolent action to his fellow-mortal in distress. The merciful shall see themselves recompensed even in this life: for they shall find, after many days, the bread they have cast upon the waters of affliction returned tenfold. *Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.*

The tyrants and conquerors of the earth, who disturb the peace of mankind, are far from happy; it falls to the share of those who love their fellow-creatures, and do all in their power to promote peace and harmony among the children of men. For they imitate the greatest perfection of their Maker; and therefore shall be acknowledged by him for his children, and participate of his happiness. *Blessed are the peace-makers; for they shall be called the children of God.*

Nor does happiness consist in liberty and ease, if those privileges are purchased at the expence of virtue; it is the consequence of a persecution for conscience-sake; for those who have suffered the severest trial that human nature is capable of sustaining, shall be honoured with the highest rewards in the blissful mansions of eternity. *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Contentment is not to be expected from the applause of the world; but will be the portion of those who are falsely reviled for their righteousness, and share in the affronts offered to God himself; for by these persecutions the prophets of all ages have been distinguished. *Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you; and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.* Matth. v. 11, 12.

Having thus shewn in what true happiness consisted, Our Blessed Lord addressed himself to his new chosen Apostles, and explained to them their duty as teachers appointed by him to conduct others in the paths that lead to eternal felicity. He enjoined them, in the most forcible manner, to be diligent in dispensing the salutary influence of their doctrine and example, that their hearers might honour and praise the great Creator of heaven and earth, who had been so kind to the children of men. And, in consideration of the frailties of human nature, he taught them that excellent form of prayer, which has been

used by Christians of all denominations to the present time.

Our Father, which art in heaven, &c. This is emphatically called the Lord's Prayer, because delivered by the Son of God himself; and therefore we should do well to understand it thoroughly, that when we enter the temple of the Lord, and address him in solemn prayer, we may have hopes that he will grant our petitions. And, above all, not to harbour in our breasts the least envy or malice against any who may have offended us; for it is only on a supposition that we have forgiven others, that we have the least reason to hope for obtaining forgiveness ourselves.

The Divine Preacher now proceeded to consider the great duty of fasting, in which he directed them not to follow the hypocrites in cloathing themselves in the melancholy weeds of sorrow; but to be chiefly solicitous to appear before God as those who truly fasted. He told them that in this case his heavenly Father, who was acquainted with even the most secret thoughts of their hearts, would openly bestow on them the rewards of a true penitent, whose mortification, contrition, and humility, he could discern without the external appearances of sorrow and repentance. It must, however, be remembered, that Our Blessed Saviour is here speaking of private fasting, and to this alone his directions are to be applied; for when we are called upon to mourn on account of public sins and calamities, it ought to be performed in the most public manner.

The next virtue inculcated by the Blessed Jesus was heavenly-mindedness, which he recommended with a peculiar earnestness, because the Jewish doctors were, in general, strangers to it. This virtue Our Lord most beautifully displayed, by shewing the deformity of its opposite, Covetousness, which has only perishable things for its object. *Lay not up for yourselves* (says he) *treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.* More solid happiness will accrue from depositing your treasures in the chambers of the courts of heaven, than in this earthly habitation of clay, where they are subject to a thousand disasters; and even, at best, can remain only for a short series of years; whereas, those laid up in the heavenly Jerusalem are permanent, subject to no accident, and will purchase a crown of glory that *fadeth not away eternal in the heavens.* Nor let any man be so foolish as to think he can place his heart on the happiness of a future life, when his treasures are deposited in this vale of misery; for wherever are laid up the goods which his soul desireth, there his heart and affections will also remain. If, therefore, ye are desirous of sharing in the joys of eternity, you must lay up your treasures in the *mansions of my Father's kingdom.*

But, lest they should imagine it was possible to be both heavenly-minded and covetous at the same time, Our Lord assured them that such a thought would be full as absurd, as to

imagine a person could, at the same time, serve, and divide his affections equally, between two masters of opposite characters, *No man* (said he) *can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. He cannot serve God and Mammon.* To strengthen this doctrine he added a few plain and evident instances of the power, perfection, and extent of God's Providence, in which his tender care for the least and weakest of his creatures shines with a remarkable lustre, demonstrating the wise and parental attention of the Deity to all the creatures of his hand. He desired them to observe the birds of the air, the lilies, and even the grass of the field; leading his most illiterate hearers to form a more elevated and extensive idea of the divine government than the philosophers had attained, who, though they allowed, in general, that the world was under the government of God, had very confused notions of his providence with regard to every individual creature and action. He taught them that the Almighty Father of the whole was the guardian and protector of every being in the universe; that every action was subject to his will, and nothing left to the blind determination of chance.

Our Blessed Lord next proceeded to point out to them the little reason there was for being anxious about the necessities of this life, more especially if they directed their conduct agreeable to the Divine will. *Behold* (says he) *the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye much better than they?* Are not the fowls of the air, who have no concern for future wants, fed and nourished by the beneficent hand of your heavenly Father? And can ye doubt that man, whom he hath made lord of the whole earth, shall be destitute of his tender care? *And why take ye thought for raiment?* Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin. *And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these.* Consider the lilies that so finely adorn the adjacent fields: how beautiful their form! how lively their colours! how fragrant the scent that comes from them! Even Solomon himself, dressed in his splendid robes of royalty, was but meanly adorned in comparison of these. And surely, if Omnipotence thus beautifully clothes the promiscuous productions of the fields, whose duration is remarkably transient and uncertain, you have not the least reason to doubt, but he will bless your honest endeavours, and send you proper cloathing. Are ye not of infinitely more value than they? Be ye anxiously solicitous to obtain the happiness of the life to come; and all the good things of this life shall, in the course of Divine Providence, be added unto you.

Having said this, Our Blessed Lord next proceeded to speak against all rash and uncharitable censure, either with regard to the characters of others in general, or of their actions in particular, lest by so doing, both God and man should resent the injury. *Judge not* (said he) *that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measures*

measures ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

If you judge charitably, making proper allowances for the frailties of human nature, and are ready to pity and pardon their faults, both your heavenly Father and your fellow-creature will deal with you after the same manner. But if you always put the harshest construction on every action, and are not touched with a feeling of your brother's infirmities, nor shew any mercy in the opinion you form of his character and actions, no mercy will be shewn you either from Omnipotence, or the sons of men. God will inflict on you the punishments you deserve, and the world will be sure to retaliate the injury.

Our Blessed Lord having represented to the multitude the great principles of the Christian religion, next directed his discourse in a particular manner, to his apostles, who were to be the teachers of the Gospel of peace. He was apprehensive they might think that the precepts he laid down were not to be attained by human nature, and therefore directed them to apply to God for the assistance of his Spirit, together with all the other blessings necessary to their salvation. He assured them, that if they asked with earnestness and perseverance, the Father of mercies would not fail to answer their requests, and give them whatever they desired; adding the noblest

precept of morality that was ever delivered by any teacher. *All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do you even so to them; for, this is the law and the prophets.*

Having laid down several other precepts and instructions, as well for the benefit of his teachers in particular, as the multitude in general, Our Lord concluded his discourse with this admonition: *That whoever heard, believed, and practised the things contained in his discourses, would, in the end, be like a wise builder, who laid the foundation of his house upon a rock; not to be affected by wind or weather; but that he, who heard and practised them not, would be like a man, who built his house upon the sand; soon to be blown down by the winds, and wash'd away by the floods.*

The grace and majesty with which Our Blessed Saviour delivered this discourse gained him universal applause, and the people readily declared the great sense they had of the difference between such Divine discourses, and the common harangues of their ordinary teachers the Scribes. And, to confirm his doctrine by the testimony of miracles, Our Blessed Lord, on his descent from the mount, healed a leper, and then remitted him to the priest to make his oblation in acknowledgment of the great benefit he had received at his hands.

C H A P. VI.

Our Blessed Lord goes to Capernaum; and heals the servant of a Roman Centurion. He raises to life a widow's son. Passes great encomiums on John the Baptist. Absolves a woman from her sins. Cures a demoniac at Capernaum, and reproves the Pharisees. Instructs the multitude in parables. Cures a woman of a bloody flux. Restores the daughter of Jairus to life, and performs other great miracles. Goes to Nazareth, and is ill treated by the people. Sends out his Apostles; and gives them their commission. The death of John the Baptist.

AFTER Our Blessed Saviour had preached his sermon on the mount, he repaired to Capernaum, attended by his disciples and a prodigious concourse of people. As he entered the city he was met by a Roman centurion, who represented to him, in the most pathetic manner, the deplorable condition of his servant, who was grievously afflicted with the palsy. The compassionate Redeemer of mankind listened attentively to his complaint and immediately told him, he would come and heal him. The centurion thought this too great a condescension to one who was not of the seed of Jacob, and therefore told him, that he did not mean he should give himself the trouble of going to his house, as that was a condescension he had not the least reason to expect, besides which he was perfectly satisfied that his word alone would be sufficient to effect the cure, the removal of diseases being as much subject to his command as the Roman soldiers were to him.

Our Blessed Lord was greatly surprized at the distinguished confidence of his humble suppliant: not that he was a stranger to his faith, or

the basis on which it was built: he well knew the thoughts of his heart before he uttered his request; but he was filled with admiration at the exalted idea the Roman officer had conceived of his power, and to make this faith the more conspicuous, he gave it the praise it so justly deserved. *Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith; no not in Israel.*

This exalted faith induced the Blessed Jesus to declare the gracious intentions of his Almighty Father with regard to the Gentiles, namely, that he would as readily accept their faith as that of the Jews, and place them with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while those who boasted of being the offspring of these great patriarchs, but fell far short of many others in their faith, should be excluded from the blissful seats of paradise. *And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

Having thus addressed the multitude, the Blessed

Blessed Jesus turned himself to the centurion, and said, *Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.* Though the idea thou hast conceived of my power is just, though remarkably great, as a reward for thy faith, I grant the petition thou hast asked. And the Evangelists add, *his servant was healed in the self-same hour.*

After Our Blessed Saviour had performed this miracle, he went to Nain, a town situated about two miles south of Mount Tabor, attended by many of his disciples, and a great multitude of people. Just as they were about entering the town, *Behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.* The poor woman, both by her words and actions, expressed the highest sense of her affliction, turning a deaf ear to such of her friends as endeavoured to mitigate her grief by the force of argument. She was now deprived of her son, her only son, in the flower of his youth, who might have lessened his mother's toils, and been to her in the place of a husband; of that husband she had long since lost, and whose loss was supportable only through the comfort of this child, the surviving image of his departed father, the balm of all her grief, the hope of her afflicted soul. Who now shall administer consolation to this solitary widow, to this lonely parent, bereaved of her husband, deprived of her child? What misery can be more complicated? What can be more natural, than that she should *refuse to be comforted*, that she should *go down to the grave, with mourning*, and visit the chambers of death, the residence of the beloved remains of her husband, and her son, with sorrow?

Towards the receptacle of mortality, that dreary wail of forgetfulness, the mournful funeral was now with slow and solemn pomp advancing, when the compassionate Redeemer of mankind met the melancholy procession, composed of a long train of her weeping neighbours and relations; who pitied her distress, sympathized with her in this great affliction, and were melted with compassion at her deplorable circumstances; but sighs and tears were all they had to offer, relief could not be expected from a human being: their commiseration, though grateful to her oppressed soul, could neither restore the husband, nor the son; submission and patience were the only lessons they could preach, or this afflicted daughter of Israel could learn.

But though man was unable to relieve the distresses of this disconsolate widow, the Saviour of the world, who beheld the melancholy procession, was both able and willing to do it. There was no need of a powerful solicitor to implore assistance from the Son of God, his own compassion was abundantly sufficient; *When the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her*: he both sought the patient, and offered the cure, unexpectedly. *Weep not*, said the Blessed Jesus to this afflicted woman. Alas! it had been wholly in vain to bid her refrain from tears, who had lost her only child, the sole comfort of her age, without administering the balm of comfort to heal her broken spirit. This our compassionate Redeemer well knew; and, therefore, immediately advancing towards the corpse, *he touched*

the bier: the pomp of the funeral was instantly stopped, silence closed every mouth, and expectation filled the breast of every spectator. But this deep suspense did not long continue; that glorious voice, that shall one day call our dead bodies from the grave, filled their ears with these remarkable words: *Young man, I say unto thee, arise.* Nor was this powerful command uttered without its effect. *He spake, and it was done*: he called with authority, and immediately *he that was dead sat up, and began to speak*; and *he restored him to his mother.* He did not shew him around to the multitude; but, by a singular act of modesty and humanity, delivered him to his late afflicted, now astonished and rejoicing, mother, to intimate, that, in compassion to her great distress, he had wrought this stupendous miracle.

The numerous spectators, who saw this miracle performed, were so astonished, that they immediately glorified God on the occasion, and publicly declared, that *a mighty prophet was sprung up among them*; and that *God had visited his people.*

We have taken notice, in a foregoing chapter, that Herod Antipas, being incensed at the honest freedom of John the Baptist in reproving his adulterous commerce with Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, had cast him into prison; and in this state he still continued, though his disciples were suffered to visit and converse with him. In one of these visits they had given him an account of Our Saviour's having elected twelve apostles to preach the Gospel, as also of the great miracles he had performed, particularly that of his having raised to life the son of the widow of Nain.

In consequence of this intelligence, the Baptist dispatched two of his disciples to Our Lord, to ask him this important question: *Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?* When the two disciples came to the place where Our Lord was they found him amidst a prodigious number of people, employed in working miracles, curing *the deaf, the blind, the lame, &c.* Having told him from whence they came, and asked the question as directed by their master, the Blessed Jesus, instead of giving a direct reply, bade them return, and inform John of what they had seen. *Go your way* (said he) *and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached.* Go tell your master that the very miracles the prophet Isaiah so long since foretold should be wrought by the Messiah, you have yourselves seen performed.

It is certain the Baptist well knew who Jesus was, and consequently, he did not send his disciples to ask this question in order to solve any doubt in his mind concerning the Saviour of the world. But it may be asked, what else could induce him to ask such a question? To this it may be answered by some, that he had no other intention than to satisfy his disciples that Jesus was the Messiah so long expected among the Jews, and to engage them to follow a more perfect master, especially as he himself was now about leaving the world.

This

This solution is, doubtless, in a great measure, right, but to remove the whole difficulty, it will be necessary to pay attention to the following observations. The Baptist, on hearing that Jesus had chosen twelve illiterate people to preach the gospel, and furnished them with powers to perform so great a work, while he was suffered to remain in prison, began to think himself neglected, and his services disregarded. He therefore sent two of his disciples to ask him this question, *Art thou he that should come; or, look we for another?* Not that he entertained any doubt of his being the true Messiah, intending nothing more, by making the demand, but to complain, that Jesus had not acted the part which he thought the Messiah should have done: and that this was really the case seems sufficiently plain from the caution added by Our Blessed Saviour himself. *And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.* As if he had said, "When you have informed your master of what you have seen and heard, tell him that he would do well not to be offended, either at the choice I have made of the Apostles, or that no miracle has been wrought for his release.

From this circumstance it appears evident, that impatience on account of his long confinement, was the true reason for the Baptist's sending his disciples with this question to Jesus; and that the purport of the answer was, to teach him submission in a case that was highly above the reach of his judgment.

But, lest the people, from what they had heard, should imbibe any opinion prejudicial to the character of the Baptist, Our Blessed Saviour thought proper to place it in a proper point of view. He praised his invincible courage and constancy, which was not to be overcome, or like a reed to be shaken by the winds. He described his austere and mortified life: for he was not clothed in fine raiment, like those who wait in the palaces of kings: adding, that he was a prophet, nay, more than a prophet. *For this is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.*

Having said thus much in favour of the Baptist, Our Blessed Saviour next proceeded to upbraid the people of the several cities, where his most wonderful works had been wrought, for their perverseness and impenitence. Though they had heard him preach many awakening sermons, and seen him perform the most astonishing miracles, yet so great was their obstinacy, that they persisted in their wickedness notwithstanding all he had done to convert them from the evil of their ways. In consequence of this their great impiety, Our Blessed Saviour denounced on them the following judgment: "Wo unto thee, Chora-
zin! Wo, unto thee Bethsaida! for if the
"mighty works which have been done in you,
"had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would
"have repented, long ago, in sackcloth and
"ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more
"tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, at the day of
"judgment, than for you. And thou, Caperna-
"naum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt
"be brought down to hell; for if the mighty
"works which have been done in thee, had been
"done in Sodom, it would have remained until

"this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be
"more tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the
"day of judgment, than for thee."

After Our Blessed Saviour had denounced these judgments on the cities which had neglected to profit by his mighty works, he addressed himself to the multitude, and having declared that the mysteries of the Gospel Revelation were better adapted to the humble and modest, than to the proud and worldly-wise, he concluded his discourse with the following heavenly invitation: *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

Here is an invitation that surely cannot fail engaging the most serious attention of every reader; if the greatness of the speaker, the importance of his request, or the affectionate manner of his address, have any weight, have any force, to effect the soul. The person who invites is Christ, the son of the Most High; he into whose hands, as our mediator, all things are delivered of his Father; he unto whom all power is given in heaven; even he who shall come in the clouds of heaven to judge all the inhabitants of the earth. It is this wonderful person who speaks, declaring at once his great willingness to receive, and his own supreme power to give, that rest and peace to the soul, which is the pursuit of every son of Adam, and is the gift only of the religion of Christ.

That nothing may prevent our accepting this benevolent offer, the Great Redeemer of mankind invites, with the most affectionate tenderness, not the great, the powerful, the merry-hearted, and the sons of joy, but *all that labour, and are heavy laden*, all that are under affliction and the bondage of sin; and those he calls, not with a desire to expose their miseries, to punish their offences, or to display his own glory, but solely with a view to render them happy. *Come, says he, come to me; I entreat you to come; I will give you rest.* I myself will release you from your heavy burdens: come to me, and you shall find perfect rest and peace to your souls. *Take my yoke upon you, for it is easy; and my burden, for it is light.*

Is it possible that creatures of a day like us; can it be possible that "mortals who have but a short time to live, and are full of misery, who come up and are cut down like a flower, who flee as it were like a shadow, and never continue in one stay;" can it be possible that they should reject and disregard a call, so full of love, so full of affection, so much infinite consequence, of such unspeakable advantage? Can they reject the love of him who gave them rest, took their burthens upon himself; and who, after all his sufferings, desires them only to *come*, to exchange their own oppressive burthens for his lightsome yoke; to abandon their sins and sorrows, and become his disciples; to love and obey him, and thence to be happy? Can we possibly despise such grace, refuse such offers, fly from such rest, thus freely proposed to us, and prefer the heavy yoke of sin, and the cruel pangs of a wounded conscience?

No sooner had our Lord finished his discourse,
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than a rich Pharisee, named Simon, went up to him, and desired he would *eat with him*. The Blessed Jesus accepted the invitation, and, accompanying Simon to his house, after the necessary preparations were made, sat down to refresh himself. He had not been long at the table, when a woman, who had left the paths of vice for those of virtue, placed herself behind him, and, from a deep conviction of her former crimes, and the obligation she owed the Saviour of mankind for bringing her to a sense of them, shed such quantities of tears, that they trickled down on his feet, which, according to the custom of the country, was then bare. But observing that her tears had wet the feet of her beloved instructor, she immediately wiped them with the hair of her head, kissed them with the most ardent affection, and then anointed them with precious ointment.

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beings. The waves broke over the ship, the waters rushed in, and she began to sink. All hopes of escaping were vanished; despair seized every individual, and they were on the brink of perishing, when they ran to Jesus, and cried out, *Master, Master, we perish!* Their vehement cries roused him from his sleep; upon which, raising his hand, which had been so often employed in acts of mercy and benevolence, he, with a stern and awful voice, rebuked the boisterous element. The raging sea instantly obeyed his command. The ærial torrent stopped short in its impetuous course, and became silent as the grave, while the mountainous waves sunk at once into their beds, and the surface of the deep became as smooth as polished marble.

The disciples had before seen their great master perform many miracles, and therefore had abundant reason to rely wholly on his power and goodness. They should have considered that he who could, by his word, restore the sick, and bring the inhabitants of the sea to their nets, could, with the same ease, have supported them on the surface of the deep, had the ship sunk beneath them, and carried them safe to the place whither they were going. But they seemed to have forgotten the power of their master; and when human assistance failed, to have abandoned all hopes of life. Well, therefore, might the Blessed Jesus, on this occasion, thus rebuke them: *Why are ye fearful? How is it that ye have no faith? Why should you doubt of my power to protect you?* The voyage was undertaken at my command; and therefore you should have been confident that I would not suffer you to perish.

It is, indeed, strange to think that the disciples should have been so remarkably terrified during the storm, and that they should afterwards make this singular reflection: *What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!* But it must be remembered, that the terror of the storm had deprived them of all presence of mind, so that they did not recollect the Divine power of their Master during the fury of the tempest: and the transition from a terrible storm to the most perfect calm, was so quick and astonishing, that they uttered this reflection, while their minds were in the most inexpressible state of confusion.

The next morning, as Our Lord landed on the East side of the Lake, in that part of the province of Trachonitis, which is called the country of the Gadareens, two demoniacs, most grievously distracted, came running towards him, and fell at his feet, and worshipped him. They were both most hideous spectacles; but one, who was much fiercer than the other, made dismal outcries both day and night, cutting his flesh with sharp stones, and though he had been often bound with fetters and chains, yet he as often broke them to pieces, raging, with his companion, among the rocks and tombs, and so furious and outrageous was he, that no traveller durst pass that way.

As soon as these two wretched objects approached Our Lord, the devils (who spoke by their mouths) declared him to be the Son of God, and expressed their fear of his being come to torment them before their time. The apostate spirits well

knew his power, and trembled lest he should immediately cast them into the torments prepared for them, and not suffer them to continue roving through the earth till the day of judgment, when they should be condemned to eternal punishments in the sight of the whole creation.

The Blessed Jesus, willing that the torments suffered by these miserable men should be known before he healed them, asked one of the devils his name, who answered, *Legion, for we are many.* Begging, at the same time, that he would not command them to repair into the deep, or bottomless pit, but suffer them to enter into a herd of swine that were feeding on the adjacent mountains. This request Our Lord thought proper to comply with, and no sooner was the Divine permission granted, than the spectators beheld at a distance the torments these poor creatures suffered, with what amazing rapidity they ran to the confines of the lake, leaped from the precipices into the sea, and perished in the waters.

As soon as the keepers of the herd beheld this strange sight, they fled, in the utmost fright, to the city of Gadara, where they gave a circumstantial account of all that had happened. In consequence of this prodigious numbers of people, not only from the city, but likewise the neighbouring villages, immediately went to the place, where they found the man (who had been the more furious of the two) sitting at Our Saviour's feet, cloathed, and in his perfect senses. But, whether it was, that the people took amiss the destruction of the swine, or thought themselves unworthy of his Divine presence, so it was, that they entreated Our Lord to depart out of their country. This request he was pleased to comply with, but, instead of permitting the man to go along with him, as he desired, he ordered him "to return to his house, and his friends, and then to declare what wonderful things the Lord had done for him."

As soon as Our Blessed Lord had repassed the lake, and was returned to Capernaum, the people, as usual, came flocking round him in prodigious multitudes. While he was teaching them one Jairus, a chief ruler of the synagogue, came running to him in all the agonies of grief, and, in the presence of the whole company, fell on the ground before him, beseeching that he would come and heal his daughter, who lay at the point of death. The forwardness of the ruler's faith claimed Our Saviour's compassion and assistance; and therefore he immediately arose, and followed him. As he passed along the streets a woman, who had for twelve years been afflicted with an issue, or flux of blood, and had spent her whole substance on physicians to no purpose, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment: for she said within herself, *If I may but touch his clothes, I shall be whole.* Nor was she deceived: for no sooner had she touched the border of the garment of the Son of God, than her issue of blood dried up; and she felt, by the return of her health and strength, and other agreeable sensations, that the cure was fully completed. But this transaction could not be concealed: the Blessed Jesus knew the whole, and was perfectly acquainted with the secret thoughts of the woman before she put them in practice. Pleased, however, with the opinion she had entertained,

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



MARK, V. 28, &c.

*A Woman miraculously HEALED of a BLOODY ISSUE,
by touching the Garment of Our Blessed Saviour.*

certained, both of his power and goodness, he would not, by any means, suffer it to pass unapplauded. Accordingly, he turned himself about, and asked this question: *Who touched me?* He well knew the person; but asked the question for the fuller manifestation of the woman's faith, and that he might have an opportunity of instructing and comforting her. His disciples, being ignorant of what had passed, were surprised at the question: *Thou seest* (said they to their master) *the multitude thronging and pressing thee, and sayest thou, who touched me?* They did not distinguish between the spiritual and corporal touch, nor knew that such efficacious virtue had gone out of their master. Jesus, however, persisted in knowing who it was that had done the thing; upon which the woman, finding it in vain to conceal what she had done any longer, went to him trembling, and told him all. Perhaps the uncleanness of her distemper was the cause of her fear, thinking he would be offended even at her touching the hem of his garment. But the Divine physician, so far from being angry, spoke to her in the kindest manner, and commendeth her faith. *Daughter,* (said he) *be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole.*

While Our Blessed Lord stopped on this occasion, a messenger came to Jairus with news that his daughter was actually dead, and therefore there was no occasion to give Our Saviour any farther trouble. This message was a terrible blow to the affectionate parent. His only daughter, who, a few days before, was in the bloom of youth, was now a pale and lifeless corpse; and with her all his joys and comforts were fled. But the Blessed Redeemer of mankind soon gave him relief; for, having overheard what the messenger said, he bid him not to fear, but only believe, and he should find the blessed effects of his faith in the recovery of his daughter.

When Our Lord entered the house, he found the mourners already come, who were deploring her death with melancholy tones, and loud lamentations, according to the custom of those times; upon which, as he went in, he desired them to cease their funeral ceremonies, because, at that time, there was no occasion for them. Having said this he entered the chamber where the damsel lay, but suffered none to follow him, except Peter, James and John, together with the father and mother of the damsel. As soon as he approached the bed where she lay, he took her gently by the hand, and, with a low voice, said, *Maid, arise.* The heavenly command was instantly obeyed: the damsel arose, as from a sleep, and with all the appearance of health and vigour, to the great wonder and astonishment of all present. At Our Saviour's departure, he ordered the parents to give her something to eat, and left a strict charge with them that they should keep the miracle a secret; but their joy was too great to conceal, what, in gratitude for so great a mercy, they thought they were obliged to divulge.

After Our Blessed Lord had performed this miracle, and left the ruler's house, he was followed by prodigious numbers of people, and among them were two blind men, who, in the most piteous manner, implored his assistance. The Redeemer of mankind, ever ready to grant

the petitions of those who apply to him for relief, listened to their request, and going with them into a house, to avoid the interruption of the multitude, he touched their eyes, and said, *According to your faith, be it unto you.* And immediately they received their sight.

No sooner were these two men departed, than the multitude brought to him a *dumb man possessed with the devil.* So moving a sight could not fail of attracting a compassionate regard from the Saviour of the world, who, being never weary of beneficent acts, immediately cast out the apostate spirit. The wretched object, being thus relieved, instantly recovered his speech, which being heard by the multitude they unanimously acknowledged that the like had *never been seen in Israel.*

After a short stay at Capernaum, Our Lord departed with his disciples, into some other parts of Galilee. He had, about a year before, been very ill treated by the inhabitants of Nazareth, the place of his education; but notwithstanding this, he was resolved once more to make them a tender of his mercy. He accordingly repaired to their city, and entering their synagogue on the sabbath-day preached to the people the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. They were, indeed, astonished at his doctrine, but so attached to the prejudice they had conceived against him, that they scandalized his person, and began to upbraid him with the meanness of his parentage and employment, as they had done before; upon which Our Lord, after finishing his discourse, retired from the synagogue, and left the city.

Upon Our Lord's departure from Nazareth, he visited most of the cities and villages of Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, preaching the Gospel, and curing all kinds of diseases among the people. Observing one day the numerous throngs and multitudes that resorted to him, he looked upon them with an eye of pity and compassion, as so many sheep destitute of shepherds; and from thence formed the resolution of sending out his twelve apostles (two and two together) into the more distant parts of Judea, while himself continued preaching in Galilee, and the places adjacent. To this purpose he invested them with a full power to cure all diseases, eject devils, and even raise the dead. He gave them instructions in what manner they were to behave in the places whither they went; but at the same time forbade them to address themselves to any of the Gentiles, or Samaritans, but only to *the lost sheep of the House of Israel.* He told them the consequences of their ministry, which, (more especially after his death) instead of entitling them to *temporal* advantages, would expose them to sundry kinds of persecutions; but, for their encouragement, he acquainted them, that those who rejected their doctrine should be treated with severity at least at the righteous judgment of God; whereas those who received it kindly, and gave (were it but a *cup of cold water*) to the least of his disciples, for their Master's sake, *should in no wise miss of their reward.*

With this commission, and these instructions, the twelve apostles (two and two together) went into all the parts of Palestine that were inhabited

by the Jews, where they preached the Gospel, and worked many miracles in confirmation of it; while their Blessed master was employed in the like offices in Galilee. The miracles which the apostles wrought raised the expectation of the people higher than ever: they were astonished to see the disciples of Jesus perform such wondrous works; and therefore concluded, that Our Saviour must be greater than any of the old prophets, who could not transmit the power invested in them to any other person.

It was now about a year since Herod Antipas had cast John the Baptist into prison for his boldness in reproving him for the adulterous commerce in which he lived with his brother's wife. Herod himself both respected and feared him, knowing that he was highly and deservedly beloved by the people; he consulted him often, and, in many things, followed his advice. But Herodias, his brother's wife, with whom he lived in so shameful a manner, being continually uneasy lest Herod should be prevailed upon to set him at liberty, sought all opportunities to destroy him; and at length an incident happened, which enabled her to accomplish her wicked intentions.

Herod having, on his birth-day, made a great feast for his friends, Herodias sent her daughter, whom she had by Philip her lawful husband, into the saloon to dance before the king and his guests. Herod was infinitely pleased with her performance, insomuch that, in the height of his mirth and jollity, he promised, with the addition of an oath, to grant her whatever she should demand even though it amounted to half of his dominions. Unwilling to lose so fair an opportunity, she immediately consulted with her mother what favour to ask, who, being prompted by the height of her malice and revenge, named the head of John the Baptist to be given her; which the daughter accordingly demanded of the king in the presence of the whole assembly. *I will (said she) thou give me, bye and bye, in a charger, the head of John the Baptist.*

This strange and unexpected request threw a damp on all the company present, Herodias and her daughter excepted. The king's enjoyment

was vanished: he was vexed and confounded. Being, however, unwilling to appear either fickle or false, before a company of the first persons in his kingdom for rank and character, he commanded the head to be given her. There was not one of the guests who had the courage to speak a single word in behalf of the innocent man, nor attempt to divert Herod from suffering his commands to be executed, though he gave them an opportunity of doing it, by signifying to them that he performed his oath merely out of respect to them. Thus Herod, through a misplaced regard to his oath, and his guests, committed a most unjust and cruel act: an act that will for ever brand his memory with dishonour, and render his very name detestable, to the latest posterity.

In a short time after Herod had given the fatal command, the head of that venerable prophet, whose rebukes had struck him with awe in his loosest moments, and whose exhortations had often excited him to the performance of good actions, was brought in a charger, and given to the daughter of Herodias, in the presence of all the guests. She eagerly received the bloody present, and carried it to her mother, who enjoyed the whole pleasure of revenge, and feasted her eyes with the sight of the head of him whom she had weakly and wickedly considered as her greatest enemy. As for the body of John, his disciples, when they heard of his death, took care to bury it, and then went, and informed the Blessed Jesus of the tragical end that had befallen their master.

Thus died the great forerunner of Our Blessed Saviour, about two years and three months after his entrance upon his public ministry, and in the 31st year of his age. The character given of him by Josephus, is as follows: "He was, indeed, a man endued with all virtue, who exhorted the Jews to the practice of *justice* towards men and *piety* towards God; and also to *Baptism*, which would become acceptable to God if they renounced their sins; and, to the *cleanness* of their bodies, added the *purity* of their souls."

C H A P. VII.

Our Blessed Lord, after bearing of the death of John the Baptist, retires to the desert of Bethsaida, where he adds to the confirmation of his mission and doctrine by performing a most astonishing miracle. The people, struck with his distinguished power, propose raising him to the earthly dignity of king. Peter, by means of his Blessed Master, performs a miracle, by walking on the surface of the sea. Our Lord preaches to the people in the synagogue at Capernaum concerning spiritual food, in order to improve the miracle wrought in the desert of Bethsaida. He reprimands the Pharisees for their superstition. Continues to display his power and benevolence in relieving several distressed objects. Reasons with the Pharisees and Sadducees, and cautions his disciples to avoid their errors and fallacies. Cures a blind man at Bethsaida, and makes trial of his apostle's faith. Delegates a special power to Peter. He informs them of his future sufferings, and is afterwards transfigured on the Mount.

ABOUT the time that Our Blessed Lord heard of the death of John the Baptist, his own apostles returned from their respective excursions, and gave him an account of every transaction that had happened in the different parts whither they had travelled. After this, Our Lord ordered them to prepare a vessel, wherein he, and they only, might cross the sea of Galilee, and retire, for a short time, from the multitude, to a desert near Bethsaida, in order, that, by meditation and prayer, they might be refreshed, and thereby better enabled to prosecute their spiritual labours.

Though Our Lord, with his apostles retired privately for this purpose, yet the multitude attended so closely, that their departure was not long concealed; and great numbers of people resorted to the place where they supposed Jesus and his disciples had secluded themselves. Struck with the greatness of his miracles on those that were sick, and anxious to receive farther instructions from the mouth of so Divine a teacher, no difficulties were too great for them to surmount, nor any place too retired for them to penetrate, in search of their admired preacher.

The sight of such a multitude of people so affected the compassionate Redeemer, that, though he went to the place for the sake of retirement, he could not withhold his presence from them; but, ascending a mountain, and taking his disciples with him, he first instructed them in several things concerning the kingdom of God, and afterwards cured such as were sick and diseased of their respective infirmities.

Our Blessed Lord was so attentively engaged in performing these beneficent acts, that he did not perceive the day was far spent, of which his disciples (too anxious about the things of this world) thought proper to inform him. "The day, said they, is now far advanced, and the place a solitary desert, where neither food nor lodging can be procured: it would, therefore, be convenient to dismiss the people, that they may repair to the towns and villages on the borders of the wilderness, and provide themselves with food and lodging, for they have nothing to eat."

In answer to this Our Lord told them, there was no necessity of sending the people away to procure victuals for themselves, as they might satisfy the hunger of the multitude, by giving them to eat. But, to shew what an opinion his disciples entertained of his power, he addressed himself to Philip, (whom he knew was well acquainted with the country) and said, *Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?* Philip, astonished at the seeming impossibility of procuring a supply for so great a multitude with the small sum of money which he knew was their all, and forgetting the extent of his master's power, answered, *Two hundred pennyworth is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.* Our Lord might now have put the same question to Philip that he did on another occasion: *Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?* Hast thou beheld so many miracles, and art still ignorant that I can supply food not only for these people, but for all the sons of men? But he only gave him this short answer. *Give ye them to eat.*

The apostles, not yet comprehending Our Lord's meaning, repeated the objection of Philip; but added, that they were willing to expend their whole stock, in order to procure as large a supply as possible. But this was by no means the design of their great Master, who, instead of agreeing to their proposition, asked, *How many loaves have ye?* How much provision can be found among this multitude? Go, and see. They readily obeyed the Divine command, and soon returning, Andrew informed him, that the whole stock amounted to no more than than five barley loaves, and two small fishes; a quantity so inconsiderable, that it scarcely deserved notice. *What are they,* said Andrew, *among so many?* And what, indeed, would they have been among such a multitude of people, if they had not been distributed by the creating hand of the Son of God?

But notwithstanding the smallness of the quantity of provision, Our Blessed Lord ordered it to be brought before him; which being done, he immediately commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, at the same time directing his disciples

disciples to range them in regular order, that the number might be more easily ascertained, and the people the more regularly supplied.

The multitude, in obedience to Our Lord's command, sat down in the manner they were ordered, big with the expectation of what this uncommon preparation portended: while the great Master of the banquet stood ready to supply the necessities of all his guests; a banquet where, though they had no canopy but the azure sky, no table but the verdant turf, where their food was only coarse barley bread and dried fishes, and their drink only water from a bubbling fountain, yet displayed more real grandeur, by the presence of the Divine Master of it, than the royal feast of the great Ahasuerus, or the splendid entertainment of the imperious Nebuchadnezzar.

The multitude being seated, Our Blessed Lord took the loaves and fishes into his hands in sight of all the people, that they might be convinced of the small quantity of provisions that were then before them, and that they could only expect to be fed by his supernatural power. But that hand, which had been the means of repeatedly sustaining nature, could easily multiply these five loaves and two fishes; for, as the Psalmist justly observes, *He openeth his hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness.* Accordingly, he looked up to heaven, and returned thanks to God, the liberal giver of all good things, for his infinite beneficence in furnishing food for all, and for the power he had conferred on him of relieving mankind by his miracles, particularly for that he was about to work. Having done, looking on the loaves and fishes, he blessed them; and so efficacious was his blessing, that they were multiplied into a quantity sufficient to supply the wants of five thousand men, besides women and children, who, on the most favourable supposition, must at least amount to an equal number. *And Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes, as much as they would.* After they were all satisfied Our Lord ordered the fragments to be gathered up, which being done, so exuberant was the supply that they filled twelve baskets. Thus did the compassionate and powerful Redeemer feed many thousand people with five barley loaves and two small fishes, giving at once a magnificent proof both of his power and goodness.

This great and astonishing miracle made such an impression on the minds of the multitude, that they had not the least doubt of Our Lord's being the long promised Messiah, and were therefore resolved to set him up for their king by main force. But he, knowing the mischief of such a design, constrained his disciples (who, perhaps, were forward enough to join with the multitude) immediately to take shipping, and sail for Capernaum. Having thus sent away the disciples, Our Lord, after spending some time in delivering heavenly instructions to the multitude, dismissed them, and then retired to the summit of a mountain, where he spent the remainder of the night in meditation and prayer.

In the mean time the ship in which the apostles

were was so tossed about by a dreadful storm that they could make but little way towards their intended port. The waves ran so high, and the wind was so contrary, that, when morning appeared, they had not got more than a league on their voyage. While they were in this distressed situation their heavenly Master (who had beheld them from the mountain) came to their assistance, walking on the foaming surface of the sea. As soon as they beheld him they were struck with astonishment, and, taking him for a Spirit, shrieked for fear. But Our Lord soon removed the horrors of their minds, by informing them who he was. *Be of good cheer, said he: It is I; be not afraid.*

Peter, who was a man of a more warm and forward temper than the rest, beholding Jesus walking on the sea, was exceedingly amazed, and conceived the strongest desire of being enabled to perform so wonderful an action. Accordingly, without the least reflection, he immediately besought his Master that he would order him to come to him on the water. He did not doubt but that Jesus would gratify his request, as it sufficiently intimated that he would readily undertake any thing, however difficult, at his command.

To convince this forward disciple of the weakness of his faith, and render him more diffident of his own strength, Our Blessed Lord was pleased to grant his request, by ordering him to come to him upon the water. Peter joyfully obeyed the Divine command; he left the boat, and walked on the surface of the sea. But the wind increasing made a dreadful noise, and the boisterous waves at the same time threatened every moment to overwhelm him. His faith was now staggered, and his presence of mind forsook him: he forgot that his Saviour was at his hand; and in proportion as his faith decreased, the waters yielded, and he sunk. In this extremity he looked around for his Master; and, when on the brink of being swallowed up, cried out, *Lord, save me!* His cry was not disregarded by his compassionate Saviour: *He stretcheth forth his hand and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?* He then set him again upon the top of the water, and walked with him to the vessel, which they had no sooner entered, than the winds ceased, and the storm subsided. This miracle greatly astonished the rest of the disciples, who, prostrating themselves before their great Master, acknowledged his Omnipotence, and admired the divinity of his power and person, saying, *of a truth thou art the Son of God.*

The vessel having gained the intended port, Our Lord proceeded with his disciples to Capernaum, whither his arrival was no sooner known than he was followed by prodigious numbers of people from various parts of the country, who brought with them their sick and diseased to be healed. Our Lord, ever ready and willing to listen to the petitions of the distressed, immediately set about performing the like beneficent acts he had heretofore done; but the multiplicity of the supplicants was so great that it was inconvenient for him to bestow particular attention on each of them. In consequence of this they earnestly

earnestly besought him, *that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.*

The multitude, whom Our Lord had miraculously fed in the desert, were in expectation of finding him, the next morning, on the mountain: they had seen the disciples take shipping without their master, and no other vessel left for him, and therefore did not doubt but they should very readily meet with him. After searching for him some time in vain, they concluded he must, by some means or other, have followed his disciples, and having an opportunity of other vessels from Tiberias, the greater part of them embarked, and went over to Capernaum, where they found him teaching in the synagogue. Astonished at seeing him there, they desired to know of him *how he got thither?* But, instead of gratifying their curiosity, Our Lord, who knew their corrupt expectations, and that they came after him, not so much from his miraculous gifts, as the gratification of their own appetites, took occasion from thence to discourse to them on a *certain food* different from what he had given them in the desert, a food which infinitely more deserved their notice, and whereof the manna in the wilderness was no more than a figure, or type. What this food was he signified to them, viz. the merits of his future death and passion, which alone could be available for the obtaining of eternal life to such as believed in his Divine Mission.

But these sublime truths, which, for the present, Our Lord thought proper to couch in figurative terms, so perplexed the intellects of the greater part of his hearers, that, mistaking the words in a *literal*, which he intended in a *spiritual*, sense, they immediately left the synagogue, and great numbers, who, for a long time, had been his strict followers, totally deserted him.

When Our Lord saw so many of the people, whom he knew to have been long his followers, quit the synagogue, he began to call in question the fidelity of his very apostles: and therefore, turning himself to them, he said, *Will ye also go away?* To this Peter (in behalf of all the rest) answered, *Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life! And we believe and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.* But, notwithstanding this liberal and frank confession, Our Lord gave them to understand, that they were not equally sound, for among the twelve whom he had selected, One of them should prove a traitor. By this he meant Judas Iscariot, who, from his conduct afterwards, justly deserved that epithet.

The season of the grand passover being near at hand, Our Blessed Lord, accompanied by his disciples, went to Jerusalem to attend that ceremony. But while he was there, the Jews being offended at his discourse in the synagogue of Capernaum, formed a design against his life, of which Our Lord being informed, after the festival was over, he left the city, and retired into Galilee.

Soon after Our Lord's return into Galilee, a certain number of Scribes and Pharisees were sent thither from Jerusalem, in order to be spies upon his actions, and to scrutinize upon his doctrine. These men observing, that, when he and

his disciples were to eat, they frequently sat down without washing their hands, contrary to the common custom of the Jews, which (as they pretended) was founded upon a tradition, expostulated with him on the reason for so doing. But Our Lord, instead of giving them any direct answer, put a question to them by way of re- crimination, viz. Why they, by their pretended traditions, vacated the laws of God, particularly; that so solemn a one of *honouring their parents*, and relieving them in their wants? Having put this question, Our Lord, considering them as so many hypocrites with whom he did not chuse to hold any farther converse, turned himself to the multitude, and informed them, "that true piety
" did not consist in *outward ceremonies*, but in a
" *sincere* observance of the laws of God; that
" no *pollution* could be in what *entered into* a
" man's mouth, but only in what *proceeded from*
" it; for (as he afterwards explained it to his
" disciples) whatever we eat does not affect the
" mind, the only seat of *defilements*, for it passes
" into the stomach, and is thrown out of the
" body, so that, be it never so gross or unclean,
" it cannot *pollute* the eater. All the *pollution*
" is from within, from the corruption of the
" heart, such as impure thoughts, unchaste de-
" sires, unholy purposes, immodest and inde-
" cent speeches, &c. These are the things that
" leave a lasting *stain* upon the soul, which a
" thing, so merely *external* as omitting to wash
" before meat, cannot do."

This was a doctrine which was far from being agreeable to the Pharisees; but they were a set of people, whose censure he justly despised, *blind leaders of the blind*, (as he very properly called them) whose vain *traditions*, as having nothing of Divine *institution* in them, it was his purpose to abolish.

From Galilee Our Lord went to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, where he entered into an house, with a design of concealing himself from the multitude. He had not, however been long there before a Syro-Phœnician woman, hearing where he was, went to him, and earnestly requested that he would cure her daughter, who was sadly tormented with a devil. Our Lord (for the trial of her faith) seemed, at first, to take no notice of her, until his disciples, to get rid of her importunities, besought him to grant her request, and dismiss her. Our Lord told them then his ministry was confined to the people of Judea, nor was he properly sent to any, but the *lost sheep of the House of Israel*. All this the poor woman heard, but so far was she from being discouraged, that, advancing nearer, she threw herself prostrate at the feet of Jesus, worshipped him, acknowledged his divinity, and prayed, saying, *Lord help me.*

The compassionate Redeemer of mankind now condescended to speak to her, but with words seemingly sufficient to have discouraged every farther attempt; nay, to have filled her with bitter dislike to his person, though she had conceived such high and distinguished notions of his mercy and favour. *It is not meet* (said he) *to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.* It is not justice to deprive the Jews, who are the children of the covenant, the descendants of Abraham, of any part of those blessings which I

came into the world to bestow, especially to you, who are aliens and strangers from the commonwealth of Israel.

But, severe as this answer was, it neither shook the poor woman's humility, nor overcame her patience. She meekly answered, *Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table.* As if she had said, "Let me enjoy that kindness which the dogs of any family are not denied; from the abundance of cures which thou bestowest on the Jews, drop this one to me, who am a poor distressed heathen: for they will suffer no greater loss by it, than the children of a family do by the crumbs which are cast to the dogs."

Our Blessed Lord having thus put the woman's faith to the most severe trial, and being convinced that she possessed a just idea of his power and goodness, as well as of her own unworthiness, wrought with pleasure the cure she solicited in behalf of her daughter; and, at the same time, gave her faith the praises it so justly merited. *O woman! (said he) great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.*

After performing this miracle, Our Lord left the coast of Sidon, and proceeded eastward towards Decapolis, in his way to which he cured a poor man who was both deaf and dumb, by only touching his tongue, and putting two of his fingers into his ears. The fame of this miracle was spread through every part of the country; and therefore, to avoid the prodigious crowds of people that gathered together in consequence thereof, Our Lord retired to a desert mountain near the Sea of Galilee. But the solitary retreats of the wilderness were unable to conceal this beneficent Saviour of the human race. The people soon discovered his retreat, and brought to him from all quarters the sick, the lame, the dumb, the blind, and the maimed; all of whom he graciously relieved from their respective complaints, to the great astonishment of the surrounding spectators. *The multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see; and they glorified the God of Israel.*

The various works performed by the Blessed Redeemer detained the multitude in the desert with him three days, during which time they consumed all the provisions they had brought into this solitary place. But Jesus would not send them away fasting, lest any who had followed him so far from their habitations should faint in their return home. Accordingly he again exerted his Almighty power, by miraculously feeding the whole multitude, which amounted to four thousand men (besides women and children) with only *seven loaves*, and a *few small fishes*.

After Our Lord had thus miraculously fed the people, he dismissed them, and went, with his disciples, into district called Dalmanutha, a part of the territories of Magdala. Here he was visited by many Pharisees and Sadducees, who having heard that he had a second time fed the

multitude in a miraculous manner, were fearful that the common people would acknowledge him for the Messiah; and therefore determined openly and publickly to endeavour to confute his pretensions to that character. To effect this they boldly demanded of him a sign from heaven, whereby they might be convinced that he was the true and long promised Messiah.

If the minds of these obstinate people had been open to conviction, the proofs which Our Lord was daily giving them would have been more than sufficient to have established the truth of his mission. But they were not desirous of being convinced; and to that alone, and not to want of evidence, or of capacity in themselves, it was owing, that they refused to acknowledge Our Saviour to be the person foretold by the prophets. Their disposition was absolutely incorrigible; which made Our Lord declare that the sign they sought should never be given them, and that the only sign they were to expect was, that of the prophet Jonas, or the miracle of his own resurrection: a sign, indeed, much greater than any shewn by the antient prophets, and consequently a sign which demonstrated that Jesus was far superior to them all. *A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given unto it; but the sign of the prophet Jonas.*

After Our Lord had removed the impertinent curiosity of the Pharisees and Sadducees, he embarked with his disciples on board a ship, intending to go to Bethsaida. His disciples, in the hurry of their departure, had forgot to take bread with them; and therefore, when Our Lord, on the passage, cautioned them to take care of the *leaven* of the Pharisees and Sadducees, they took the meaning of his words in a literal sense, and imagined he meant they should not purchase bread of those heathenish people. Upon this Our Lord first gently reproved them for the blindness of their understandings and the shortness of their memories, in having so soon forgotten his miraculous multiplication of the loaves and fishes at two different times; and then gave them to understand that his words did not concern the leaven of bread, but the corrupt Doctrines of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

As soon as Our Blessed Lord landed at Bethsaida, the people brought unto him a blind man, earnestly requesting that he would be pleased to restore him to sight. The inhabitants of this city had, by their perverseness and infidelity, so offended Our Lord, that when they presented this man to him for cure, he would not do it in the city in sight of the multitude; but, taking him out at the gate, he anointed his eyes with spittle, and then laid his hands on them. The man, at first, saw objects indistinctly, men like trees walking; but when Our Lord laid his hands on him the second time, his sight was perfectly restored, and he *saw every man clearly*.

From Bethsaida Our Lord retired into the territories of Cæsarea Philippi*, where, being inclined

* This city was situated near the head of the river Jordan, and was, by the Canaanites, called Laish; but, being ta-

ken by some of the Danites, it was by them called Dan. Augustus Cæsar gave it (together with all the territories be-
longing

inclined to make some trial of his apostles faith and proficiency, he asked them this question: *Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?* To which they replied, *Some say, that thou art John the Baptist: some Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.* The people in general mistook the character of Our Saviour, because he did not assume that outward pomp and grandeur with which they supposed the Messiah would be adorned. Our Lord was therefore desirous of knowing what idea his disciples formed of his character, as they had long enjoyed the benefit of his doctrine and miracles. He accordingly asked, *What they themselves understood him to be?* To which Simon Peter (in the name of the rest) replied, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.* This confession Our Lord not only allowed to be true, and what was confirmed by the attestation of God himself, but, in allusion to Peter's name (which signifies a rock) promised that he should have a principal hand in establishing his kingdom; and that the Christian church should be erected on his labours, as on a solid foundation, never to be destroyed. "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven†: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

After delegating this power to Peter, Our Lord strictly forbade all his disciples to tell any man that he was the Messiah; because it had been decreed, in the courts of heaven, that he should be rejected by the rulers of Jerusalem as a false Christ, and should suffer the pains of death; circumstances which (if generally known) could not fail of giving his followers great offence, as they did not yet understand the true nature of his kingdom.

The heavenly discourses which the apostles had repeatedly heard from their Divine Master had, no doubt, filled their minds with the most lofty imaginations; and therefore Our Lord thought proper to acquaint them with the sufferings he was to undergo, in order to check any fond expectations they might entertain of temporal power. But this was a subject very disagreeable to the ears of Peter, who giving intimation thereof, Our Lord sharply rebuked him, and then told him and his fellow apostles, that all who intended to share with him in the glory of the heavenly Canaan must deny themselves; that is, they must be always ready to renounce every worldly pleasure, and even life itself, when the cause of religion required it. He also told

them, that in this life they must expect to meet with troubles and disappointments, and that whoever intended to be his disciple, must take up his cross daily and follow him.

In order to add to the weight of this argument, and enforce the necessity of self-denial, Our Lord told his disciples that a day was fixed for distributing rewards and punishments to all the human race: that he himself was appointed by the Father as universal judge; so that his enemies could not flatter themselves with the hope of escaping the punishments they deserved, nor his friends be afraid of losing their eternal reward. He farther told them, that he should not appear to judge the world in his low and despised condition, but magnificently arrayed both in his own and his Father's glory: that he should not be attended by twelve weak disciples, but surrounded by miriads of celestial spirits, with numberless hosts of mighty angels: nor should his rewards be the great offices and large possessions of a temporal kingdom; but the joys and comforts of immortality.

Thus did the Blessed Jesus fully explain to his disciples the true nature of his kingdom; but, lest his doctrine of being appointed the universal judge might appear incredible to them at that time, on account of his humiliation, he told them, that some who then heard him speak should not taste of death till they saw him coming in his kingdom. *Verily, I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.* There are some here present that shall not die till they see a faint representation of the glory in which I shall come at the last day.

It was not long before this Divine prediction was most amply fulfilled. About eight days after, Our Lord being with the multitude in the country of Cæsaria Philippi, left them in the plain, and, accompanied only by his three most intimate apostles, Peter, James, and John, ascended a very high mountain, where, while he was employed in prayer, he was suddenly transformed into another kind of appearance. His face became radiant and dazzling, shining like the sun in his meridian clearness. His garment acquired a snowy whiteness, far beyond any thing human art could produce: a whiteness bright as the light, and sweetly refulgent, but in a degree inferior to the radiance of his countenance. And to heighten the grandeur and solemnity of the scene, Moses, the great law giver of Israel, and Elias, appeared in the beauties of immortality, in the robes which adorn the inhabitants of the heavenly Canaan, and familiarly conversed with him on the subject of his future sufferings and death.

At

lenging to it) to Herod the Great. He, after rebuilding the place, gave it, (with the tetrarchy of Ituræa and Trachonitis to which it adjoined) to his youngest son Philip, who, when he had enlarged and beautified it, so as to make it the capital of his dominions, and chief place of his residence, gave it the name of Cæsarea Philippi, purely to compliment Tiberius Cæsar, who was then emperor; partly to preserve the memory of his own name; and partly, to distinguish it from another Cæsarea (mentioned in Acts x. 1.) situated

on the Mediterranean, and which was built by his father in honour of his great benefactor Augustus Cæsar.

† Peter is here to be considered as one who acted in the name of all the rest of the disciples; and when Christ says, *I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven*, he means no more, than that all those who followed his example should, in the end, reap the advantages arising from such virtuous and pious conduct.

At the time this transfiguration took place Our Lord's three disciples had fallen asleep, but waking while the three heavenly messengers were in converse, they were exceedingly surprized and terrified at the sight of so much glory and majesty. Peter, indeed, begged of his Master, that they might continue in that happy place : *Master (said he) it is good for us to be here ; and let us make three tabernacles ; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.* He imagined that Jesus had now assumed his proper dignity ; that Elias was come according to the prediction of the prophet Malachi, and that the Messiah's kingdom was at length begun. He therefore thought it necessary to provide some accommodation for his master and his august companions, intending, perhaps to bring the rest of the disciples, with the multitude, from the plains below, to behold his matchless glory.

But while Peter was talking, and arguing with himself, on the sight before him (scarce knowing what he said in his fright and transport) a bright shining cloud came over them, and a voice from thence proclaimed, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased—hear ye him.* At the sound of these words, the apostles were struck with a much greater consternation than before, and prostrating themselves on the ground, continued in that posture for some time, till at length the Blessed Jesus approached, and dispelled their fears, by saying, *Arise and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.*

Our Blessed Lord, after continuing all night

with his three disciples on the mountain, returned, early the next morning to the plain, charging them to conceal what they had seen till after he was risen from the dead. He well knew that the world, and even his own disciples, were not yet able to comprehend the meaning of his transfiguration, and that if it had been published before his resurrection, it might have appeared incredible, because nothing but afflictions and persecutions had hitherto attended him. *He was truly a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.*

But the doctrine of the resurrection, to which the transfiguration alluded, was what greatly puzzled the apostles ; besides which they were greatly surprized, at the sudden departure of Elias, and could not comprehend what the Scribes and Pharisees meant by having asserted that *that* prophet was to come upon the earth before the Messiah. They, therefore, after long debating among themselves, asked their Master this question : *Why say the Scribes that Elias must first come ?* To this Our Lord answered, that Elias should truly come first, according to the prediction of the prophet Malachi, and restore all things ; but, at the same time he assured them, that he was, in effect, come already, and that he had received the like bad treatment from his countrymen, that himself, in a short time had reason to expect. *But I say unto you that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed : likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.*

C H A P. VIII.

Our Blessed Lord cures a youth who was dreadfully tormented with an evil spirit. He foretels his death to his disciples, to whom he recommends humility and forgiveness of injuries. Conforms to the custom of the country by paying the tribute, which he raises by a miracle. Refuses to destroy the city of Samaria, which would not receive him in his journey to Jerusalem. Harangues the multitude at the Feast of Tabernacles. Exempts the woman taken in adultery from the punishment annexed by the Jews to that crime. Preaches to the people the mysteries of Christianity, and promises eternal life to his disciples. Persuades Mary's choice, and both teaches and encourages his disciples to pray. Inveighs against the Scribes and Pharisees. Preaches against Covetousness, and exhorts the people to Watchfulness, a preparation for death and judgment, and for a timely repentance.

AS Our Blessed Lord was descending from the mount with his three disciples, after his transfiguration, he saw a great multitude surrounding the nine whom he had left in the plain, and on his nearer approach found that they and the Scribes were in deep debate together. The Blessed Jesus asked the Scribes what was the subject of their debate with his disciples : to which one of the multitude answered, " Master, " I have a son who hath an evil spirit : and " wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him ;

" and he foameth and gnasheth with his teeth, " and pineth away : and I spake to thy disciples, " that they should cast him out, and they could " not."

It was evident from this answer being made by one of the multitude, that the Scribes had been disputing with the disciples on their not being able to cure this afflicted youth. Perhaps their making this unsuccessful attempt had given the Scribes the opportunity of boasting, that a devil was at length found which neither they nor their Master

Master were able to conquer. This seems to be indicated by the manner in which Our Saviour addressed himself to these arrogant people. *Oh faithless generation (says he) how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Will no miracles ever be able to convince you? Must I always bear with your perverseness? You have surely seen sufficient demonstrations of my power, notwithstanding which ye still discover the most criminal infidelity.*

After Our Lord had spoken in this manner to the Scribes, he turned himself to the father of the young man, and said, *bring thy son thither.* The man instantly obeyed the Divine command, but no sooner was the youth brought in sight of his deliverer than the evil spirit attacked him, as it were, with double fury, *the spirit tare him, and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.* Our Blessed Lord could easily have prevented this attack; but he permitted it, that the minds of the spectators might be impressed with a more lively idea of the distress of the youth. And for the same reason it was, that he asked the father, how long he had been in this deplorable condition? To which the afflicted parent replied, *Of a child. And oft times it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.*

The inability of Our Lord's disciples to cast out this spirit had greatly discouraged the afflicted father, and the exquisite torture of his son, together with the remembrance of its long continuance, so dispirited him, that he began to fear this possession was even too great for the power of Jesus himself, as the Scribes had strongly asserted; and therefore he could not help expressing his doubts and fears on the occasion. But the Blessed Jesus, to make him sensible of his mistake, said to him, *If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.* On which the father cried out with tears, *Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.* The vehement manner in which he spoke caused the people to gather together from every quarter, and in the presence of the whole multitude Jesus rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, *Thou dumb spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.* No sooner was the powerful exit pronounced, than the devil, with a hideous noise, and convulsing the suffering patient in the most deplorable manner, came out, leaving the youth senseless, and without motion: till Jesus, taking him by the hand, restored him to his senses, and delivered him perfectly recovered to his father.

During the whole of this transaction, the nine disciples remained totally silent. They were, doubtless, vexed to think, that they had lost, by some fault of their own, the power of working miracles, lately conferred upon them by their Master; and for this reason were afraid to ask him the cause of it in the presence of the multitude. However, as soon as they had retired to a private place, they besought Our Lord to tell them, why they failed in their attempt to heal that remarkable youth? To which Jesus replied, *Because of your unbelief.* But, to give them some encouragement, he added, *If ye have*

faith, nothing shall be impossible unto you. Nothing shall be too great for you to accomplish, when the glory of God, and the good of the church are concerned, provided you have a proper degree of faith.

From the Mount of Transfiguration Our Lord proceeded through several parts of Galilee towards Capernaum, in the way to which he acquainted his apostles, the second time, with his approaching death and resurrection, at the same time desiring them to take particular notice of what he said. But the hopes of a temporal kingdom had so forcibly impressed their minds, that they found it very difficult to believe, or conceive, what he said, and yet they were afraid to ask him for an explanation.

Soon after this, and while they were still on their journey, there arose a dispute among the apostles which of them should have the chief place of dignity in their Master's kingdom, still dreaming of a temporal sovereignty. This Our Saviour, by his Divine Spirit, knew; and therefore, to give a proper check to their ambitious thoughts, he first informed them, that the only way for any man to become great in his kingdom, was to be lowly in his own esteem; and then calling a little child, and setting him in the midst of them, he proposed him as a pattern of meekness and humility. *Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Unless ye be humbled by the power of Divine grace, and brought to a due sense of the vanity of all earthly preferments, riches and honours, and become meek and humble in spirit, ye shall be so far from becoming the greatest in my kingdom, that ye shall not even enter its borders. But whosoever shall be satisfied with the station in which God has placed him, receive with meekness all the Divine instructions, however contrary to his own inclinations, and prefer others to himself, that man is really the greatest in my kingdom. *Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself, as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.* He likewise cautioned them against doing the least injury, or giving any offence, to such as believed in him, even though they were little children. *Whosoever (said he) shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.* And to remove the occasion of all such offences, he exhorted them to mortify their inordinate affections, though they were as dear to them as an eye, an hand, or a foot, because his heavenly Father (like a diligent shepherd that delights in the recovery of a stray sheep) would not that any believer should perish.

Having said thus much, Our Lord next proceeded to lay before his apostles some excellent rules relative to Brotherly reproof, church censures, and Forgiveness of injuries. The more strongly to enforce the last duty, he related to them the parable of a certain king, who, calling his servants to account, found that one of them owed him an immense sum, no less than ten thousand talents, which, upon his insolvency, and humble petition, he freely forgave. The wretch,

who had received this indulgence, was no sooner out of the king's presence, than he seized upon his fellow-servant for a trifling debt of only an hundred pence, and cast him into prison, even though he had used the same pathetic intreaties to him, that himself had done to the king his master: which, when the king came to understand, he sent for the ungrateful monster, upbraided him with his baseness and cruelty, and, in a rage, ordered him to prison, till he should discharge the whole of his own debt. *And so likewise* (says our Lord in the application) *shall my heavenly Father deal with all such as will not forgive their brother's trespasses.*

While Our Blessed Lord was giving these instructions to his disciples, he was interrupted by James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, who informed him that a certain stranger had cast out devils in his name, but that he had forbidden him because he did not join himself to their company. Our Lord was far from approving of this their conduct, because he looked upon it as a sure argument, that whoever did miracles in his name could be no enemy to his person. *Forbid him not:* (says he) *for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me.*

This interruption of James and John finished the discourse for the present, and our Lord, with his apostles, prosecuted their journey for Capernaum. They had no sooner arrived at that city, than the collectors of a certain tribute for the use of the temple came to Peter, and asked him if his master would pay it? Peter promised that their demand should be satisfied; but, on a more mature consideration, he was fearful of asking his master concerning his paying the tax on any pretence whatever. Our Lord was no stranger to what had happened, and the consequences arising therefrom, namely, Peter's fears for having made the promise of payment without having first mentioned it to his master. As soon, therefore as Our Lord saw Peter, he said unto him, *What thinkest thou, Simon? Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? Of their own children, or of strangers?* Peter replied, *Of strangers.* Our Lord rejoined, *then are the children free;* meaning, that as he was himself the Son of the great King, to whom heaven, earth, and sea belong, he had no right to pay tribute to any earthly monarch whatever, because he held nothing by a derived right. But the Blessed Jesus was always careful to avoid giving any offence, and therefore resolved to acquiesce in the payment of the tribute demanded, which he obtained by means the most miraculous that can be conceived. He ordered Peter to take a line and hook, go to the sea, and throw it in, and that in the mouth of the first fish that came up he should find a piece of money equal to the sum demanded of them both. *Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them, for me and thee.*

The reason of Our Lord's taking this extraordinary method of paying the tribute money was, because the miracle was of such a nature

as could not fail demonstrating to the people that he was the Son of that God for whose services it was gathered. In the very manner, therefore, of paying this tribute he shewed Peter that he was free from all taxes; and at the same time gave this useful lesson to his followers: that when their property was affected only in a small degree, it was better to recede a little from maintaining their just privileges, than to offend their brethren, or disturb the state, by an obstinate resistance.

The time was now approaching for the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, at which all the males of the Jewish nation capable of travelling repaired to Jerusalem, and, during the whole time of the feast, dwelt in tabernacles, or booths, made of the boughs of trees, in commemoration of their ancestors having had no other habitation during their forty years sojourning in the wilderness. To this feast some of Our Lord's relations desired he would accompany them, and there shew himself openly to the heads of the Jewish nation. They did not themselves believe that he was the great prophet so long expected; and condemned the method he pursued in the discharge of his public ministry. They could not conceive what were his reasons for spending so much time in the deserts, and remote corners of the kingdom, while he assumed so public a character as that of the Redeemer of Israel. Jerusalem, the seat of power, was, in their opinion, much the properest place for him to deliver his doctrines, and work his miracles. They thought that if he did this before the great and learned men of the nation, he might obtain their favour, which would have great weight in increasing the number of his followers, and might, in the course of time, induce the whole nation to own him for the Messiah.

Our Lord well knew the rancorous prejudice of the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and therefore did not think proper to reside among them any longer than was absolutely necessary. They had more than once attempted his life, and therefore there was very little reason to imagine that they would believe his miracles, or embrace his doctrine; but, on the contrary, that they would, if possible, destroy him, before he had finished the work, for which he took upon him the veil of human nature, and, for a time, resided among the sons of men. *My time* (said the Blessed Jesus to his unbelieving relations) *is not yet come; but your time is alway ready. The world cannot hate you, but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast, for my time is not yet full come.* As if he had said, "It is not proper for me to go up before the feast begins; but you may retire to the capital whenever you please; the Jews are your friends, you have done nothing to displease them; but the purity of the doctrine I have preached to them, and the freedom with which I have reprov'd their hypocrisy, and other enormous crimes, have provoked their malice to the utmost height; and therefore, as the time of my sufferings is not yet come, it is not prudent for me to go so soon to Jerusalem."

There

There was also another reason why Our Lord did not chuse to accompany his relations to the Feast of Tabernacles: the roads were crouded with people, and as they would naturally have gathered round him, and accompanied him the whole way, it might have given fresh offence to his enemies, and, in a great measure, have prevented his miracles and doctrines taking the desired effect. He therefore chose to remain behind till the multitude were all gone, when he set forward, in as private a manner as possible, for Jerusalem, accompanied by his twelve apostles, and many others, who had long been his most strenuous disciples.

The nearest way to go from Galilee to Jerusalem was through a principal part of the province of Samaria, the inhabitants of which entertained the most inveterate hatred against all those who went up to worship in Jerusalem. On their journey Our Lord sent two of his apostles before him to a place in Samaria, that they might find a proper reception for him against his arrival thither. But when the prejudiced Samaritans found the intention of his journey was to worship in the temple of Jerusalem, they refused to receive either him or his disciples into their houses.

On the return of the two messengers with this intelligence, James and John were so exceedingly incensed, that they proposed to their master to call for fire from heaven to destroy such inhospitable wretches, alledging, in excuse for such violent proceedings, the example of the prophet Elijah. But Our Blessed Lord, desirous of displaying examples of humility on all occasions, sharply rebuked them for entertaining so unbecoming a resentment for such an offence. *Ye know not* (said he) *what manner of spirit ye are of.* Ye are ignorant of the sinfulness of the disposition ye have now expressed; nor do ye consider the difference of times, persons and dispensations. The severity exercised by Elijah on the men who came from Ahab to apprehend him, was a just reproof to an idolatrous king and people; very proper for the times, and very agreeable to the characters, both of the prophet who gave it, and of the offenders to whom it was given; and at the same time not unsuitable to the Mosaic dispensation.

But the Gospel breatheth a very different spirit; and the intention of the Messiah's coming into the world was not to destroy, but to save, the lives of the children of men. And (that he might prove his doctrine by his practice) when ten leprous persons, who came out of the neighbourhood of that place, whose inhabitants had behaved to him with such disrespect, presented themselves with loud cries to him for help, his compassion was as ready to relieve, as their necessity was to ask; for, while they were going to shew themselves to the priest at Jerusalem (as he had directed) they all found themselves cured. But, see the great ingratitude of human nature! Of the ten who received this miraculous blessing, only one returned to give their benefactor thanks—and he was a Samaritan.

Our Blessed Lord having thus returned good for evil, and the greatest kindness for the most palpable affront, proceeded on his journey, and

came to another place, the inhabitants of which being not of so inhospitable a disposition as those of the former place, they readily gave accommodation to Jesus and his disciples, who continued with them during the course of that night. Early the next morning they resumed their journey, which they prosecuted without meeting with any inconvenience or interruption from the people of the respective places through which they passed, all of whom treated them with the greatest civility and respect. Before Our Lord arrived at Jerusalem he sent out seventy of his disciples, two by two together (in the same manner as he had before sent out his twelve apostles) into those parts which he himself intended, in a short time, to visit, and gave them instructions much of the same import with those which, upon the like occasion, he had given to his twelve apostles.

For some time after Our Lord's arrival at Jerusalem, he did not appear in public, nor even till after the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles had commenced. This occasioned great disputes among the Jews concerning his character. Some affirmed that he was a true prophet, and that his absenting himself from the feast could be owing only to accident; while others as confidently asserted, that he was an impostor, who practised a variety of artifices to delude and deceive the people.

At length, about the middle of the time of celebrating the feast, Our Blessed Lord appeared openly in the temple, and preached to the people, delivering his doctrines with such strength of reason, and fluency of expression, that the generality of his hearers were astonished, particularly when they had recollected that he had never received the advantage of a learned education. *And the Jews marvelled, saying, how knoweth this man letters, having never learned?*

In answer to this the great Redeemer told them, that his doctrine was not produced by human wisdom: that the sages of the world were not his instructors: that he received his knowledge from heaven; and that it was the doctrine of the Almighty, whose messenger he was. *My doctrine* (said he, that is, the doctrine I preach) *is not mine, but his that sent me.* Nor can he who is desirous of practising the doctrine I deliver, if he will lay aside his prejudices, and sincerely desire to be taught of God, be at a loss to know from whom my doctrines are derived; because he will easily discern whether they are conformable to the will of man, or of God. It is no difficult matter to discover an impostor, because all his precepts will tend to the advancement of his own interest, and the gratification of his pride: whereas all the doctrines delivered by a true prophet have no other end than that of the glory of God. *He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh the glory of him that sent him, the same is true, and there is no unrighteousness in him.*

But notwithstanding the strength of his argument, several of Our Lord's most inveterate enemies asked, with sarcastical surprize, if the boldness of Jesus, and the silence of the rulers, proceeded from their being convinced that he was the Messiah; and at the same time, to deride his pretensions

Pretensions to that high character, said, that they were acquainted both with his parents and relations: but that no man, when Christ appeared, would be able to tell from whence he came, founding their opinion on these words of the prophet Isaiah, *Who shall declare his generation?* Isaiah liii. 8.

In answer to this Our Blessed Lord told them, that their knowing his parents and relations was no reason against his having the prophetic character of the Messiah. That he was not come of himself, but was sent from heaven by his Father, who had uttered nothing by his servants the prophets concerning the Messiah, but what was true, and would be amply fulfilled in him: but that they were totally ignorant of his gracious perfections and counsels, and had no inclination to obey his just commands. That they were really ignorant of what the prophets had delivered concerning the Messiah; for, had they understood their predictions, they would have known that one of his principal characters was, to understand the perfections and will of God more fully, and explain them to the sons of men more clearly, than any other messenger ever before sent from the Most High. And that would they attentively consider the doctrines he delivered, they would soon perceive that character remarkably fulfilled in him, and be convinced that he was the true and long promised Messiah.

Notwithstanding the power and solidity of these arguments, yet they were far from removing the malice and prejudice of Our Lord's enemies. Many of the people, however, convinced by the many powerful miracles he had wrought, and the unanswerable reasons he had advanced in support of his character, believed in him, and affirmed publicly in the temple, that he was the Messiah. The Scribes and Pharisees were highly provoked at this attachment of the common people to Jesus; and therefore, on the last and great day of the feast, they met in council, and resolved to send proper officers to apprehend him, and bring him before them, resolving, if possible, to find some accusation against him, whereby they might be empowered to put him to death.

While the heads of the Jewish nation were concerting these measures against Our Lord, he was employed in preaching the doctrine of the Gospel to the people in the temple, the subject of which was the short time he had to remain on earth. He told them, that his ministry was drawing to a period, and therefore they should, during the short time it was to last, be very careful to improve every opportunity of hearing his word: that they should listen, with the greatest attention, to every discourse, in order that their minds might be stored with the truths of the Almighty, before he returned to his Father; for that, after his departure, they should earnestly wish for the same opportunities of seeing him, and hearing his instructions, but that they should never obtain them. *Yet a little while* (said he) *am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come.*

The Jews, who did not understand that Our Blessed Saviour alluded to his own death, resur-

rection, and ascension to the right hand of the Majesty on high (whither their sins would not permit them to follow him) were struck with amazement at this part of his doctrine, and imagined, that he intended to leave Judea, and preach to their brethren dispersed among the Gentiles. But this supposition was not sufficient; because if he did go and preach among the Gentiles, they thought it was not impossible for them to follow him thither. Then said the Jews among themselves, *Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? Will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles? What manner of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come.*

Just at the time the Jews were in this state of surprize and confusion at Our Lord's mysterious expression, the water from Siloam was brought into the temple, according to the appointment of the prophets Haggai and Zachariah. One part of this water they drank with loud acclamations, in commemoration of the mercy shewed to their ancestors, who were relieved by a stream which miraculously flowed from a rock, and refreshed a whole nation, then ready to perish with thirst in a dry and sandy desert. The other part of the water they poured out as a drink offering to God, accompanying it with their prayers, for the former or latter rain to fall in its season, the whole congregation singing the following passage: *With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.* Isaiah xii. 3.

It was the custom of Our Blessed Lord to deliver moral instructions in allusion to any occurrences that happened in the course of his peregrinations. Accordingly he took this opportunity of inviting, in the most affectionate manner, all who were desirous of knowledge and happiness, to come to him and drink, alluding to the ceremony they were then performing. And to encourage all such as were desirous of believing in him, he promised them the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which he represented under the similitude of a river flowing out of their belly. *If* (said he) *any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.* John vii. 37, 38.

While our Lord was thus preaching to the people in the temple, the officers from the council came to apprehend him; but finding that the topic of his discourse was of a very singular nature, and that he appeared to deliver himself with remarkable fervour, their curiosity induced them to listen to him with the most serious attention. The consequence of this was, that the rage with which they had come was melted away: the sweetness of his pronunciation, and the plainness and perspicuity of his discourse elucidated the beauties of truth, and caused them to shine forth with the most distinguished lustre. His very enemies, therefore, who were come from the council on purpose to apprehend him, were astonished: the greatness of the subject, made, as it were, visible by the Divine speaker, filled their understandings: the warmth and tenderness with which he delivered himself, penetrated their hearts; they felt new and uncommon emotions, and being overwhelmed with the greatness of their

their admiration, were fixed in silence and astonishment: they condemned themselves for having undertaken the business on which they were sent, and returned without performing it.

As soon as the officers returned to the council, they were asked why they had not brought with them Jesus of Nazareth? They told them they could not execute their office, because, said they, *never man spake like this man**. This reply enraged the council, who reviled them for presuming to entertain a favourable opinion of one whom they had pronounced an impostor. It is strange, said they, that you, who are not ignorant of our sentiments concerning this person, should entertain a favourable opinion of him. Has any person of rank, or celebrated for their knowledge of the laws, believed in him? Are not his followers the very dregs of the people, who are totally ignorant of all the prophecies concerning the Messiah?

The officers did not make answer to these railing accusations of their masters; but Nicodemus (who was one of the council, had conversed with Our Lord, and was, indeed, a secret disciple of his) seeing with what violence his enemies were bent against him, could not forbear interposing in his behalf, by urging the unlawfulness of condemning a person without hearing; so that, after some reflections thrown upon him, as a favourer of Our Lord, the assembly broke up without proceeding any farther against him, because, indeed, as yet *his time was not fully come*.

In the evening of the same day Our Blessed Lord went to the Mount of Olives, about a mile from the city, and where he sometimes used to pass the night with his apostles. Early the next morning he returned to the temple, and, as he was teaching the people that were gathered about him, the Scribes and Pharisees brought in a woman taken in the act of adultery, and desired him to give his judgment in the case. Their purpose was, to find an occasion of accusing him, either for assuming a judicial power if he condemned her, or, of nulling the law if he acquitted her. But Our Lord (seeming as if he did not take notice of what they said) stooped down, and wrote something † with his finger on the dust of the pavement; till, upon

their importuning him for an answer, he raised himself up, and (looking steadfastly at them) said, *He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone ‡*; after which he again stooped down, and wrote as before. This unexpected answer baffled the designs of these invidious accusers, who, being thoroughly convinced of their own crimes, retired one by one, and left the woman; so that when Our Lord raised himself up again, and found her only by him, he asked what was become of her accusers, and whether any one of them had condemned her. The woman answered in the negative; upon which Our Lord said to her, *Neither do I condemn thee. Go; and sin no more*. The wisdom, knowledge and power of Our Blessed Saviour, were eminently displayed on this occasion: his wisdom in defending himself against the malicious attempts of his enemies; his knowledge in delivering the secrets of their hearts; and his power, in making use of their own consciences to render their artful intentions abortive.

After this interruption Our Blessed Lord returned to the business of instructing the people; and, in a sublime discourse, opened several great mysteries of Christianity, particularly his Divine mission and co-equality with the Father. In displaying the first of these he made use of the following words: *I am the light of the world: he that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life*. This assertion gave great offence to the Scribes and Pharisees, who told him he must be a deceiver because he boasted of himself. The reply Our Lord made to this was to the following effect: You are not to suppose that I call myself the light of the world from a principle of pride and falsehood: the title justly belongs to me; nor would you yourselves refuse to acknowledge it, did you know from what authority I received my commission, and to whom, when I have executed it, I must return. But of these things ye are totally ignorant: you judge according to outward appearances, and condemn me, because I do not destroy those (as you vainly think the Messiah will do) who refuse to submit to his authority. But the design of the Messiah's coming is very different from your mistaken notions: he is not to destroy, but to save the children of men.

Though

* In this answer there are two things worthy of particular notice. 1st. The power of Christ's preaching to change the temper of mens minds; for these men went with hearts alienated from Christ, and with intent to apprehend and carry him before the council, but they returned with great admiration at his excellency and worth. 2dly. The honesty and integrity of these men is very remarkable: for they did not return with a pretence that they feared the multitude, and therefore thought it dangerous to apprehend him; but ingenuously confessed that they could not prevail with themselves to lay violent hands upon a person whose discourses were so excellent and divine.

† It is generally agreed that, upon this occasion, Our Lord wrote some memorable sentence, or other, but what the sentence was, the conjectures of learned men have been various. The two most general opinions are, first, that it was the reproof against a rigid and uncharitable temper, which occurs in his Sermon on the Mount: *Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?* And secondly (which appears the most probable of the two) that it was the very words, which, upon his raising himself up, he pronounced to the

woman's accusers: *He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone*. John viii. 7.

‡ According to the laws of Moses, the punishment to be inflicted on a person convicted of adultery was, that he should be led out of the city, and stoned with stones till he died, and that the hands of the witnesses should be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hands of all the people, Deut. xvii. 7. It is in allusion to this passage that Our Saviour says, *Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone*, because it ill becomes those who are guilty either of the same, or greater crimes, to be so very zealous for the punishment of others. This, however, is not meant to prevent those magistrates, who are entrusted with the execution of the laws, from putting them in force against malefactors, even though themselves are not entirely exempt from sin; but it still reminds them, that they should execute judgment with compassion and tenderness, and as much moderation as the law will allow them, considering that they themselves are not free from guilt, but as deserving of punishment for other sins, as those poor creatures are, who have fallen into crimes, which are punishable by human judicature.

Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. He added, that if he should condemn any person for unbelief, the condemnation would be just, because his mission was true, being confirmed by his own testimony, and that of his heavenly Father, by whose authority, and agreeable to whose will, all his sentences would be passed. *And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.*

Our Blessed Lord, having thus asserted the divinity of his mission, and shewn that his judgment was just, next proceeded to inform them, that the Father himself bore witness to the truth of his mission. You surely cannot complain even if I should punish you for your unbelief, because you are, by your own laws, commanded to believe the testimony of two witnesses, that my mission is evidently true. The actions of my life, which are perfectly agreeable to the character of a messenger from heaven, bare sufficient witness of me, and the Father, by the miracles he has enabled me to perform, beareth witness of me: ye are therefore altogether culpable in objecting to my mission. *It is written in your law, that the testimony of two is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me, beareth witness of me.* John viii. 17, 18.

Having said this, the Scribes and Pharisees asked Our Lord where was the Father, the other witness to whom he appealed? In answer to this he told them, that their conduct sufficiently demonstrated that they were strangers both to him and his Father; for had they known who he was, they must have known who it was he called his Father. That had they been convinced he was the Messiah, they must also have been convinced that the Father was no other than that Omnipotent Being who created and upheld all things by the word of his power. *Ye neither know me (said he) nor my father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my father also.*

After Our Lord had said thus much relative to his mission and co-equality with the Father, he proceeded to inform the people of the great abilities he had to give eternal life to his followers, and the necessity there was of believing in him, which he said would be more evident after his crucifixion; and thence taking occasion to expose the wickedness and degeneracy of those who sought to take away his life, and telling them how unlike to the behaviour of the sons of Abraham (whom they boasted themselves to be) such causeless and inveterate malice was, he so provoked them with his severe reflections, and especially with the superiority which he claimed above Abraham, that they took up stones to cast at him; but Our Lord, by a miraculous power, escaped their malice, and passing unhurt through the crowd, retired out of the temple.

Before Our Lord left Jerusalem, the seventy disciples, whom he had sent to preach the Gospel, returned from their journey, and ministry, greatly rejoicing, because the very devils, by virtue of his name, had been subjected to them. *Lord (said they with extacy) even the devils are subject unto us, through thy name!* Upon this Our

Lord promised them still greater success, and invested them with power to tread upon the most venomous beasts, and all the malignant instruments of Satan, without the least hurt to themselves. He at the same time gave them assurance of a blessing which was more peculiarly theirs; viz. that their names were recorded in heaven; after which he broke out into a rapture of joy; glorifying God for having revealed the mysteries of the Gospel to the simple and ignorant, and more particularly to his disciples, who, by virtue of that revelation, enjoyed an happiness which many of the wise and great had in vain desired.

As soon as Our Blessed Lord had finished his discourse with his disciples, a certain scribe, a doctor of the law, stood up, and asked him, what was necessary to be done for the attainment of that eternal life which he was so very liberal in promising to his followers. In answer to this Our Lord remitted him to the law, turning his own weapons against himself. He asked him what was written in the law, of which he professed himself a teacher? The scribe answered, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.* To this Our Lord replied, *Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.* Perform these commands, and thou wilt fulfil the duties of an Israelite: for on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

The scribe (who, in all probability, did not expect such an answer) being conscious of his own defects, and, that he did not possess the qualities necessary for obtaining eternal life, was willing (as the sacred historian informs us) *to justify himself*; that is, was willing to stillie the rising suggestions of his own conscience, and, at the same time, to make a shew of his own devotion. In order to this he asked Our Lord, *And who is my neighbour?* A question very natural to be asked by a bigotted Jew, whose narrow notions led him to despise all who were not of his own fold; all who were not the natural descendants of his ancestor Abraham.

But to remove the obstinate and uncharitable attachment of the Jews to their own principles, open their hearts to a more generous and noble way of thinking, and shew them the only foundation of true love, and the extensive relation they and all mankind stood in to each other, Our Blessed Lord answered the scribe's last question by delivering the following most beautiful and instructive parable.

A certain person in his journey from Jerusalem to Jericho, had the misfortune to fall into the hands of robbers, who not content with taking his money, stripped him of his raiment, beat him in a deplorable manner, and left him for dead. While he continued in this miserable condition, utterly incapable of assisting himself, a certain priest happened to travel the same road; *and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.* And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, *came and looked on him, and passed on the other side.* So little compassion had these ministers of religion for a brother in the most deplorable circumstances of distress, that they continued their journey, without offering to assist so miserable an

an object, notwithstanding their sacred characters obliged them to perform, on every occasion, the tender offices of charity and compassion. It was a brother, a descendant of Abraham in distress; and therefore those hypocrites could offer no reasons to palliate their inhumanity. Their stony hearts could behold the affectionate Israelite, lying in the road naked and cruelly wounded, without being the least affected with his distress.

Though these teachers of religion were hypocrites, and wholly destitute of grace and charity, compassion glowed in the heart of a Samaritan, who, coming to the spot where this helpless object lay, ran to him; and though he found him to be a person of a different nation, and one who professed a religion opposite to his own, yet the hatred which had been instilled into his mind from his earliest years, and every objection arising from the animosity subsisting between the Jews and Samaritans, were immediately silenced by the tender sensations of pity, awakened by the sight of such complicated distress; his bowels yearned towards the miserable object; though a Jew, he flew to him, and assisted him in the most tender manner.

It was the custom in these eastern countries for travellers to carry their provisions with them: so that this compassionate Samaritan was enabled, though in the desert, to give the wounded man a little wine to recruit his spirits. He also bound up his wounds, pouring into them wine and oil, placed him on his own beast, and walked himself on foot to support him. In this manner he conducted him to an inn, took care of him during the night; and in the morning, when business called him to pursue his journey, recommended him to the care of the host, left what money he could spare, and desired that nothing might be denied him; for whatever was expended he would repay at his return.

Having finished the parable, Jesus turned himself to the lawyer, and asked him, *Which now of those three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?* The lawyer, struck with the truth and evidence of the case, replied, without the least hesitation, *He that shewed mercy on him.* Upon which Jesus replied, *Go, and do thou likewise.* Perform all the good actions in thy power, extend thy kindness to every one, who stands in need of thy assistance, whether he be an Israelite, an Heathen, or a Samaritan. Consider every man as thy neighbour in respect to works of charity, and make no enquiry with regard to his country or religion; but only with regard to his circumstances.

A short time after this Our Blessed Lord, accompanied by his apostles, left Jerusalem in order to return to Galilee. In the evening of the first day's journey, he stopped at a small village called Bethany, where he was joyfully received by a woman named Martha, who, with her sister Mary, and her brother Lazarus were highly in favour with him. Martha was desirous of expressing her regard for the Divine guest, by providing for him and his disciples the best entertainment in her power: but her sister, who was of a more contemplative disposition, sat quietly at the feet of Jesus, listening, with the utmost

attention, to his doctrine and heavenly instructions. Martha, being greatly fatigued with the burthen of the service, complained to Jesus of the little care Mary took to assist her. *Lord (said she) dost thou not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Bid her, therefore, that she help me.* But Martha's officiousness incurred a reproof from Our Lord, who, at the same time, commended Mary for her attentive application to his instructions. *Martha, Martha, (said he) thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful. And Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.* Luke x. 41, 42.

Soon after Our Blessed Lord had returned to Galilee, as he was one day praying with his disciples in a private place, they, taking it into consideration how necessary it was for them to be directed in the right performance of their duty, begged of him to compose a form of prayer for their use, as John the Baptist had done for his disciples. In compliance with this request Our Lord not only gave them the same excellent form (called the *Lord's Prayer*) which he had given them in his Sermon on the Mount, but encouraged them likewise, from the consideration of God's goodness and fatherly affection (far more indulgent to his children than any earthly parents were to theirs) to be constant in their petitions to him, telling them, that if they solicited with fervour, importunity, and an indefatigable perseverance, they need not doubt of a most gracious answer to their humble requests.

Not long after this, upon Our Lord's curing a demoniac that was dumb, the Pharisees renewed their old senseless cavil of his ejecting devils by Beelzebub, which he confuted by the same arguments he had formerly used on a like occasion; and when they again demanded of him a sign from heaven, he again made them the same reply, namely, that no greater sign should be given them than the sign of the prophet Jonas, alluding to the time when he was to remain three days and three nights in the chambers of the tomb.

The next day, after Our Lord had been preaching to the people, he sat himself down, with his disciples, to eat, without previously using the Jewish ceremony of washing the hands. This gave great offence to the Pharisees, upon which Our Lord took occasion from thence (as he had before done) to speak severely against their ridiculous superstition, in affecting outward neatness in their manner of living, while they neglected to cleanse their souls from internal pollution. He then proceeded to reproach both them and the Scribes, the teachers of the law, with their pride and prevarication, their hypocrisy and spirit of persecution, at which they were so exasperated, that they used all possible methods to ensnare him in his discourse, and to find some accusation, whereby they might destroy him.

One of the company, seeing with what authority Our Lord reprov'd, and determined among the people, besought him to arbitrate between him and his brother concerning an estate which had lately fallen to them: but this office he chose to decline, and from thence took occasion to preach against covetousness, or placing our felicity

city in worldly possessions ; and, to enforce this, he propounded the parable of a certain rich man, who, when he had acquired a very considerable estate, proposed indulging himself in voluptuousness, but was disappointed of his design by the intervention of sudden death.

He therefore exhorted his disciples not to be too anxious about the things of this world, but to place their dependence on God's Providence, who, having promised them a kingdom in heaven, would not fail of supplying them with what was necessary here. He then exhorted them to charity, to watchfulness, to preparation against the day of judgment, or the arrest of death, and (under the emblem of stewards, or governors, in great mens houses) recommended gentleness and temperance, and particularly cautioned them against indulging themselves in any kind of excess.

While Our Lord was thus discoursing to his disciples and the multitude, news was brought him that Pilate, the Roman governor, had caused a great number of Galileans to be massacred while they were offering their sacrifices at the altar * ; as also that another sad accident had happened at Jerusalem, where, by the falling of the tower of Siloam † no less than eighteen persons were killed. The Jews thought these were Providential punishments on the sufferers for their having been greater sinners than their neigh-

bours ; but Our Lord told them that was not the case, and that their sufferings tended only to lead others to repent, which if they did not do they would, in all probability, meet with the like or worse judgments. He then, to engage them all to a speedy repentance, related to them the parable of the fig-tree, which the master of the vineyard ordered to be cut down, because, for three years, it had not borne any fruit : but, upon the gardener's promising to use a more than ordinary care and diligence about it, he was prevailed on to let it stand one year longer, but, with this determination, that, if it still continued *unfruitful*, he would not then fail to cut it down.

By this parable Our Blessed Lord represented the goodness of God towards the Jews, in giving them the outward dispensations of religion, and informing them of the improvements they should make of these advantages, and the punishment that would be inflicted on them, in case they slighted such benevolent offers. He also represented by it, in a very beautiful manner, the unbounded mercies of the Almighty in sparing them at the intercession of his Son, and giving them a farther time of trial, and still greater advantages, by the preaching of him and his apostles ; concluding with an observation, that if they neglected this last opportunity, it would certainly be attended with the most fatal consequences.

* It is generally imagined that this piece of history relates to the sedition which Judas Gaulonites raised against the Roman governor in Judea, when he, and one Sadducus, a Pharisee, possessed the people with a notion, " that taxes were a badge of their slavery ; that they ought to acknowledge no sovereign but God himself, nor pay any tribute, but to his temple." It was, very probably in Galilee, where this Judas first broached these sentiments, and there acquired such a multitude of followers and abettors, as made Josephus call him Galilaus, as well as Gaulonites. And, indeed, his followers in general, though they were of different provinces by birth, obtained the same name. But when they

came to Jerusalem, at one of the great festivals, and began to spread these seditious notions against Caesar, Pilate, who was then the Roman governor, caused a considerable number of them to be slain in the temple, while they were sacrificing at the altar.

† The fountain of Siloam rose at the foot of the wall of the east part of the city of Jerusalem. The tower, called after its name, was, doubtless, built upon the wall, not far from it ; and, being now become antient, might fall upon such a number of people, either passing by, or standing under it.



C H A P. IX.

Our Lord removes the complaint of a woman who had been deformed eighteen years, and confutes the ruler of the synagogue. Goes to Jerusalem, and there gives sight to a man, who had been born blind. The Pharisees endeavour to destroy the force of this miracle; and for that purpose strictly examine the person relieved, who boldly asserting it was Christ that had performed it, they excommunicate him from the synagogue. Our Lord shews the Pharisees to be false guides, and himself the true one; and, upon asserting his divinity, is in danger of being stoned. He leaves Jerusalem, and retires to Bethabara. Explains to the people the great difficulty of attaining salvation. Is warned to depart the country, in order to escape the resentment of Herod. Predicts the fate of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Cures a man of the dropsy; recommends humility, and represents the different success of the Gospel. Informs the people what qualifications are necessary for them to become Christians, and vindicates his own conduct in conversing sometimes with sinners. Shews the manner in which we are to employ our riches, and the miserable consequence of uncharitableness. Reminds his disciples of several duties, especially of humility, and cautions them against being deluded by false prophets.

IT was the custom of Our Blessed Lord to preach to the people, on every sabbath, in one of the Jewish synagogues. While he was one day thus employed, he observed a woman, who, for the space of eighteen years, had laboured under a great state of infirmity, by which her body was so bent that she was not able to raise herself upright. Here was a proper object for his compassion and power to exert themselves; and therefore calling the woman to him, he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she became strait, and glorified God.

This distinguished display of Divine power and goodness, instead of being considered by the master, or ruler of the synagogue, in its proper light, so highly offended him, that he openly testified his displeasure, and reproved the people as sabbath-breakers, because they came on that day to be healed. *There are six days (said this surly ruler to the people) in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath-day.*

But Our Lord soon silenced this hypocritical Pharisee, by shewing him that he had not deviated from their own avowed practice. They made no scruple of loosing their cattle and leading them to water on the sabbath-day, because the mercy of the action sufficiently justified them for performing it. And surely this action of loosing a woman, a rational creature, that had been bound by so afflicting a complaint during the tedious interval of eighteen years, was abundantly justified: nor could this bigotted ruler have thought otherwise, had not his reason been blinded by his superstition. *Thou hypocrite (said Our Lord to him) doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, so, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath-day? And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glo-*

rious things that were done by him. Luke xiii. 15, &c.

The Feast of Dedication was now approaching, in consequence of which Our Lord, after several removals, repaired again to Jerusalem; where, as he was walking in the streets on the sabbath-day, he saw a poor man who had been blind from his birth. The sight of so affecting an object could not fail of exciting the compassion of the benevolent Saviour of mankind: nor could the affronts and indignities he had received from the Jews hinder him from *working the works of him that sent him*, and dispersing blessings on that rebellious and ungrateful nation. Accordingly, he beheld this poor blind man, not with a transient view, but fixed on him the eyes of his Divine compassion, and presented him with the riches of his adorable love.

The disciples observing the affectionate regard of their Master, towards this object of compassion, and imagining that he was going to give another instance of his Divine goodness, asked him, whether the man's blindness was occasioned by his own sin, or the sin of his parents? They had often heard their Master say, that afflictions were generally the punishment of particular sins; and had learned, from the law of Moses, that sin was the fruitful source of evil, and that the Lord punished the iniquities of the fathers upon the children. Their Master kindly answered, that neither his own, nor the sins of his parents, were the immediate cause of this peculiar punishment; but that he was born blind, *that the works of God should be made manifest in him*; particularly his sovereignty in bringing him blind into the world, his power of conferring the faculty of sight upon him, and his goodness in bearing witness to the doctrine by which men were to be saved.—By this pertinent reply of the Saviour of the world, we may learn, that a curious enquiry into the afflictions of other men should be carefully avoided; and that we ought to suppose every calamity inflicted on mankind

as directed by Providence for the advancement of his glory: that whatever miseries we behold in others, we must not impute them to their personal sins, lest, like the disciples in the case before us, we assign to sin what owes its origin to the glory of our Maker.

Our Blessed Lord, having assigned the cause of this person's blindness, namely, *that the works of God should be made manifest in him*, added, *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work*; intimating to his disciples, and all that were present, his unwearied labour in the work of his Almighty Father. In this he was employed day and night, during the time of his sojourning in the flesh. To this alone he directed all his thoughts and all his actions. This he esteemed even as his meat and drink; and for this he suffered the neglect of his ordinary food, that he might finish the blessed, the beneficent work of human salvation.

It was now the sabbath-day, and the Blessed Jesus was going to perform a miracle, in which there was to be a small degree of servile work. He therefore told his disciples that they need not be surprized to see him work miracles of that kind on the sabbath; for though they should imagine that he might defer them till the day of rest was over, his time on earth was so short, that he was obliged to embrace every opportunity that offered of working miracles. He might, perhaps, chuse to perform this work on the sabbath, because he knew the Pharisees would, for that reason, enquire into it with the utmost attention, and, consequently, render it more generally known. But, be this as it may, Our Lord took occasion, at this time, to speak of himself as one appointed to give light also to the minds of men involved in darkness. *As long as I am in the world* (said he) *I am the light of the world*. From this expression it evidently appears that Our Saviour's miracles were designed not only as proofs of his mission, but also as specimens of the power he possessed as the Messiah. For example, by feeding the multitude with the meat that perished, he signified that he was come to quicken, and nourish mankind, with the *bread of life*, that sovereign cordial, and salutary nutriment of the soul. His giving sight to the blind was a lively emblem of the efficacy of his doctrine to illuminate the blinded understandings of men. His healing their bodies represented his power to heal their souls, and was a specimen of his authority to forgive sins. His casting out devils was an earnest of his victory over Satan and all his powers. His raising particular persons from the dead was the beginning of his triumph over death, and a demonstration of his ability to accomplish a general resurrection; and, in a word, his curing all promiscuously, who applied to him, shewed, that he was come, not to condemn the world, but to save, even the chief of sinners.

The great Redeemer of mankind, having declared the salutary purposes of coming into the world proceeded to perform the great miracle he had designed in the presence of the people. *He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the*

clay, and said unto him, Go wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation sent.) He went his way, therefore, and washed, and came seeing. John ix. 6, 7. It is evident, from former examples, that our Blessed Lord could very easily have performed this miracle without the assistance of any external application. Indeed, the method made use of by the great Redeemer on this occasion was so far from being likely to effect a cure, that it seemed adapted to produce a quite contrary effect. We must, therefore, conclude, that it was intended farther to display his Divine power, and to convince the unbelieving Jews that he was the true and long expected Messiah.

This astonishing miracle produced a general curiosity and surprize among the people, and induced those who had seen this blind man in his dark and deplorable condition, to be very particular in their enquiries into the means of so singular a miracle. It was, in short, the subject of general conversation, and it is natural to think might, therefore, have proved the means of a general conversion; but, as too frequently happens, a perverse curiosity prevented its salutary effects. Some of the poor man's neighbours readily believed it, while others, though they did not absolutely condemn it, yet could not get over their doubts. *The neighbours, therefore, and they which before had seen him, that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.*

The poor man (transported with gratitude and joy for the great benefit he had received) finding his neighbours doubtful of the identity of his person, proclaimed himself to be the very same whom they had lately seen begging in total darkness. *I am he*, thus wonderfully blessed with sight, by the peculiar mercy of God! *I am he* who was blind from my birth, whom ye have all seen, and many relieved, in my miserable distress! *I am he* who was involved in total darkness, but now enjoy the enlivening light of day!

This ample and frank acknowledgment of the fact excited the curiosity of the people to know how the miracle was performed. They therefore asked him, *How were thine eyes opened?* To which he replied, *A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash; and I went and washed, and I received sight.* They then asked him where the person was, who had performed so great a work: to which the man answered, *I know not.* For Jesus had retired while the man went to wash his eyes in the pool of Siloam, probably, as was his general custom, to avoid the applauses which would naturally have been given him by the multitude.

The neighbours, either stimulated by envy, or excited by a desire of having the truth of this extraordinary event searched to the bottom, took the man before the council, thinking them the proper judges of so mysterious a circumstance. No sooner was the man placed before the assembly, and the particulars related of what had passed, than the Pharisees began to question him, *how he had recovered his sight.* To which the man boldly answered, *He put clay upon mine eyes,*

yes; and I washed, and do see. On hearing this, and knowing the day on which the miracle was performed, the Pharisees declared that the Author of it could not be a prophet sent from God, because he violated the sabbath: but others gave it as their opinion that no deceiver could possibly work a miracle of that kind, because it was too great and beneficial for any evil person to have either the inclination or power to perform.

The council being thus divided in their opinion with regard to the character of Jesus, they asked the man himself what he thought of the person who had conferred on him the blessing of sight? To which he boldly and plainly answered, *He is a prophet.* Such of the council who were averse to believe the miracle, or in hopes of making the affair look intricate, now sent for the parents of the man, and asked them these three questions: Whether he was their son? Whether he was born blind? And whether they knew how, and by whom he was cured? To the two first questions they answered directly that he was their son, and was born blind; but, as to the last, they referred them to him, who (as they told them) was of age to answer for himself; not daring to say any more for fear of the Sanhedrim, who had made an order to excommunicate any person who should acknowledge Jesus to be Christ.

The Pharisees, finding that all attempts either to discredit, or disprove the fact, useless, had recourse to their usual method of calumniating the author of it. After repeating the questions they had before asked the man, and received the like answers, in order to draw him from the good opinion he had conceived of his benefactor, they bade him ascribe the glory of his cure to God, and not to look upon Jesus with any veneration, because he was a sinner and a sabbath-breaker, and consequently could not be a prophet sent from God. In answer to this the poor man told them, that it was very strange they should not perceive from whence the person was, whom God had endued with such a miraculous power as that of opening the eyes of one born blind, a thing that was never heard of before since the world began; and that therefore it must be evidently manifest to every impartial person that if he were not sent, and Divinely inspired, he could never have done such wonderful cures.

The Pharisees were not ignorant that this argument was conclusive: they felt its whole force, and well knew that it could not be resisted. Accordingly they did not attempt to answer it, but had recourse to abusive language and punishment. *Thou wast altogether born in sins* (said they to the poor man) *and dost thou teach us?* Dost thou pretend to instruct, in a matter of this kind, the guides of the people, and those who have

rendered themselves eminent for their knowledge in the law? After having thus upbraided him, *they cast him out*; that is, they passed on him the sentence of excommunication, which was the highest punishment they had power to inflict.

But though the poor man was cut off from the Jewish society, yet he was soon made ample amends by being admitted into one where no unjust sentences can ever be passed, nor any member separated from it, namely, the church of Christ. Soon after his being excommunicated from the synagogue his Divine benefactor, meeting him in the street, declared himself to him to be the Messiah; upon which the poor man, believing on him, immediately fell prostrate at his feet, and *worshipped him.*

After Our Blessed Lord had received the poor man's homage, he directed his discourse to the people, in which (under the allegory of a shepherd and his sheep) he proved the Pharisees to be no better than blind guides, nay, than thieves and robbers, who had climbed up into the sheep-fold, or made themselves rulers and governors in God's church, without any proper commission from him. Upon the same grounds he condemned all those false Christs, who before him had usurped the title of the Messiah, and asserted his own right to it by an argument that no other shepherd durst produce, *viz. his laying down his life for his sheep*, which, he said, were to consist of Gentiles* as well as Jews, and all together make up one flock under one shepherd.

Before the Feast of Dedication was concluded, as Our Lord was walking in Solomon's Porch†, several of the Jews went to him, desiring that he would tell them, in positive terms, whether or not he was the Messiah? Our Lord, knowing they did not ask this question for information, but to gain an opportunity of accusing him to the Romans as a seditious person, told them that they must form a judgment of him from his actions. *I told you, and ye believed not; the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep.* Your unbelief is the effect of your attachment to this world, being unwilling to receive the doctrine of the kingdom of heaven: because you must then renounce all your fond hopes of temporal power and advantages. But, on the contrary, those who are of a meek and humble disposition, and their minds free from worldly passions, easily perceive the truth of my doctrine and miracles, and consequently are readily disposed to become my disciples. Nor shall such persons lose their reward; for I will willingly receive them, and make them partakers of eternal life in my Father's kingdom. And however assiduous malicious men may be,

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* These Our Saviour calls *his other sheep* (John x. 16.) by way of anticipation, because he foreknew that many of the Gentiles (when once his Gospel came to be tendered to them) would give it a ready reception, be converted, and be baptized; and because the ceremonial law (which was, as it were, the partition wall between the Jews and Gentiles) was shortly to be broken down, and the Gentiles admitted to the same privileges with those Jews who believed in his name.

† This porch consisted of some stately cloisters on the east side of the temple, and not far from the Court of the Gentiles. It was called Solomon's, either to preserve the memory of that great prince, or because it was built according to the order of *that* which he erected. In this porch Our Saviour was walking, because, at that time, it was winter, and therefore he here found a covering from the inclemency of the weather; whereas, in the summer season, it was customary for the Jews to walk in the open courts of the temple.

in endeavouring to hinder others from believing on me, they shall never be able to effect their purpose, though assisted by all the powers of darkness. For my heavenly Father, who hath given them to me is far greater than them all: nor is any able to contend with him: and this powerful, this Almighty Being and I are one. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one."

The Jews were so incensed at this last expression, which they considered as blasphemous, that they took up stones to cast at him, in conformity to the Mosaic law, which commands all blasphemers to be stoned. Our Lord seeing this, asked them, which of the beneficent miracles he had wrought in confirmation of his mission deserved such treatment? *Many good works* (said he) *have I shewed you from my Father; for which of these works do you stone me?* As if he had said, I have fed the hungry in the desert, I have healed the lame, I have cleansed the leper, I have cured the sick, I have given sight to the blind, I have cast out devils, and I have raised the dead: for which of these works are ye going to stone me? The Jews answered, *For a good work we stone thee not: but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.* We are far from thinking that thou deserveest punishment for any good work thou hast done in favour of the afflicted and distressed: the punishment is intended to chastise thee for thy blasphemous speeches; for thou, though a weak mortal like ourselves, arrogantly assumest the power and majesty of the Most High, and by claiming the incommunicable attributes of the Deity, makest thyself God.

The reply Our Blessed Lord made to this was to the following effect: Has not the Scriptures expressly called those *gods* who were commissioned to govern God's people, on account of their high office, and the inspiration of the Spirit, which was, though sparingly, bestowed upon them? Can you, therefore, impute to that person whom the Almighty hath sanctified and sent into the world to save lost mankind, and pay the price of redemption for all the sons of men? Can you impute blasphemy unto him, for taking upon himself the title of the Son of God? If my own assertion be not sufficient to convince you of my personal dignity, you must surely think that the many miracles I have wrought abundantly prove that they are the works of the Most High, as Omnipotence alone could perform them; and, therefore, that the Father and I are so united, that whatever I say or do, is approved of by the Almighty. "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, upon whom the word of God came, and the Scriptures cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye be-

lieve not me, believe the works: that ye may know and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him."

This reply, instead of satisfying the Jews, rather tended to enrage them the more; upon which Our Lord, not thinking proper to hold any farther argument with so obstinate and headstrong a people, miraculously got from them, and thereby escaped that punishment they intended to inflict on him. *Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hands.*

As soon as the Feast of Dedication was over, Our Lord left Jerusalem, and, crossing the river Jordan, retired to Bethabara, where great multitudes resorted to him both to hear his instructions, and to be healed of their diseases. Here his ministry was attended with very great success; for the inhabitants of the country, remembering what had been told them by John the Baptist concerning Jesus, and being sensible that the doctrine and miracles of Our Saviour were fully equal to what the Baptist had foretold, firmly believed him to be the Messiah; so that he not only made a great number of profelytes, but likewise considerably increased the number of his disciples.

During Our Lord's stay in this part of Galilee a certain person one day put a singular question to him concerning the number of those that should be saved: *Loua*, said he, *are there few that be saved?* From this question Our Lord took occasion to admonish his hearers, by telling them, That they ought to use their utmost endeavours to enter in at the *strait gate* of salvation, because the number of those, who should not attain it would be large, that they ought to do it with all expedition, because, when once the gate was shut, and the means of salvation withdrawn, all pretences of having heard the glad tidings of the Gospel, and of having been conversant with him upon earth, would gain them no admittance. *Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not, whence ye are.* Luke xiii. 24, 25. Our Lord then told them, that all workers of iniquity should be utterly excluded; and therefore the Jews, in particular, would have cause to lament, when they should see many strangers, from all parts of the earth, possessed of the glories of heaven, with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the antient prophets, while themselves should be thrust out, and, instead of the first, become the last. *And behold, these are last which shall be first, and these are first which shall be last.*

While Our Lord was discoursing to the people on this and other topics, some of the Pharisees, who could not any longer bear with patience the power and authority which he had gained among the people, in hopes of getting rid of him, went and suggested the danger he was in from Herod Antipas, so long as he continued in Galilee, which was part of his dominions. In answer to this piece of information, Our Lord told the Pharisees,

Pharisees, that, having but a short time to live, he was determined to devote it to the relief of the distressed, the curing diseases, and casting out devils; and as to Herod's designs against his life, they were altogether superfluous, because he foreknew that he was to suffer death at Jerusalem, which was the place appointed (as it were) for the slaughter of all the prophets. He then broke out into a most pathetic exclamation against the inhabitants of that city, reproaching them with rejecting the kind offers of the Gospel, and with killing the messengers sent from God; and then denounced the sad calamity that would, in a short time, overtake them. *Ob! Jerusalem, Jerusalem, (said he) which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not? Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, ye shall not see me until the time come, when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.* Luke xiii. 34, 35.

After Our Lord had finished this awful exclamation and prediction against the inhabitants of Jerusalem, he went into the house of a Pharisee of distinction to eat bread. It happened now to be the sabbath-day, and Our Lord had not been long in the Pharisee's house, before there was brought unto him a man afflicted with a dropsy. This, no doubt was a scheme projected by the Pharisees, in order (as they thought) to involve Our Saviour in this difficulty—That either, by forbearing to heal at that time, he would betray his fear and strengthen their superstitions with regard to such ritual observances; or else that by doing it, he must incur the censure and odium of a Sabbath-breaker and a contemner of the law. But Our Lord so ordered the matter as to accomplish what he saw fit without any opportunity given for his enemies to compass their ends by it. As soon as the afflicted person appeared, Our Lord, who knew the secrets of their hearts, asked the Pharisees whether it was *lawful to heal upon the sabbath-day?* But they not chusing to give any answer to the question, Jesus laid his hands upon the diseased person, and immediately his complexion returned, his body was reduced to its ordinary dimensions, and his former health and strength were instantly restored.

So surprising a miracle, it might reasonably be thought, would have convinced the Pharisees, that the Author must have been endued with power from on high; but, instead of being persuaded that he was a person sent from God, and laboured only for the benefit of the children of men, they were contriving how they might turn this miracle to his disadvantage. Our Lord, however, soon disconcerted their projects, by proving that, according to their own avowed

practice, he had done nothing but what was truly lawful. *Which of you, (said he) shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath-day?* If a misfortune happens to one of your beasts, you make no scruple of assisting it on the sabbath, though the action may be attended with considerable labour: and surely I may relieve a descendant of Abraham, when nothing more is requisite than touching him with my hand. This argument was conclusive, it being so plain, that the most stupid could not avoid feeling its force, nor were the most malicious able to contradict it.

When the entertainment was nearly at hand, the guests appeared very anxious to obtain the uppermost places at the table; which being particularly observed by Our Lord, he endeavoured to convince them how commendable it was for a man to seat himself in a place *below*, rather than *above*, his rank and condition, because daily experience shewed, that humility was a virtue, which was so far from debasing, that it raised and exalted the person who practised it. “When thou art bidden (said he) of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room, lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him, and he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place, and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room, that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee. For whosoever exalteth himself, shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.”

Our Lord, having thus addressed the guests in general, next directed his discourse to the Master of the house in particular, whom he found to be totally regardless of the poor and needy. He gave him (and in him all others) the good advice of inviting the poor, the blind, the lame, who could not make any requital, rather than his own friends or rich acquaintance, who were able to return the compliment, to his entertainments, telling him that in so doing he might depend upon a recompence from God in the kingdom of heaven. “When thou makest a dinner or a supper, (said he) call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind. And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompence thee: for thou shalt be recompenced at the resurrection of the just.”

On hearing these last words one of the company called out, *Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God*.* From hence Our Lord took occasion to represent the different success of the Gospel, the rejection of it by the Jews, and the

* It appears, from the parable which follows, that the kingdom of God here does not signify the kingdom of heaven in its most exalted sense, but only the kingdom of the Messiah, whereof this worldly-minded Jew here speaks according to the received sense of his nation, as of a glorious temporal

kingdom, in which the Jews should lord it over the Gentile world, enjoy their wealth, and be provided with all those earthly blessings and delights in which they placed their felicity.

the call of the Gentiles. This he delivered under the emblem of a feast, to which those that were invited, upon sundry pretences, refused to come, so that the master of the house was obliged to send out into the streets and lanes of the city, and into the highways, to collect a sufficient number of guests, being determined, *that none of those, who were first invited, should taste of his supper* †.

After Our Lord had delivered this parable he departed from the Pharisee's house, and being followed by a prodigious concourse of people, he explained to them what they were to trust to if they intended to become his disciples. He told them that they must renounce even some of their most lawful *affections*, and prepare themselves to undergo the most unjust *persecutions*, if they thought of properly professing his religion; and therefore (that they might not fail in the day of trial) he advised them to consider well beforehand what such a profession would cost them: "For, as he, who begins to build, and has not money to accomplish it, leaves his work imperfect, and himself becomes ridiculous; or as he that designs to go to war, and has not men or money enough to go through with it, had better never have engaged in it; so he that undertakes to be a Christian, must resolve to renounce all that is *precious*, and to bear all that is *afflictive* to him in this world, otherwise he will never be able to hold out." *Whoever be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.*

Among the great multitudes that daily resorted to Our Saviour to hear his discourses, were many Publicans and Sinners. This gave great offence to the Scribes and Pharisees, who murmured at his condescending goodness in so freely conversing with (what they called) such infamous people. But, to vindicate himself in this respect, he compared his conduct to that of a man, who, having an hundred sheep, left the ninety and nine in quest of the one which was gone astray: as also to that of a woman searching, with all diligence, for a piece of silver that was lost, and rejoicing exceedingly when she found it. By these comparisons he intimated the great care all prophets and pastors ought to take of those committed to their care, and the obligation they lay under of searching diligently for every wandering sinner, whose conversion is a grateful offering to the Almighty. *There is joy in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth.*

But to illustrate this doctrine still farther, and to shew that the greatest sinner, if convinced of his unworthy and lost condition in himself, might find grace and favour in the sight of God, upon

a devout and serious repentance, he delivered a most beautiful parable, which is deservedly esteemed a master-piece of its kind; and the substance of which is to the following effect:

A certain man had two sons, the younger of whom, not content to live in his father's house, safe under his protection, and happy under his eye, desired his father to give him the portion of goods which fell to his share. The indulgent father did not hesitate to grant his request; but the ungrateful son had no sooner obtained what he asked of his parent, than he left the presence and neighbourhood of so kind a father, and retired into a far country, where he had an opportunity of indulging, without restraint, his wicked inclinations; and there he wasted his substance in riotous living. Having thus consumed the portion given him by his indulgent parent, he began to feel the miseries of want, and, to add to his misfortunes, a terrible famine arose in the land; so that he soon became acquainted with the sharp stings of hunger. In this distressed condition, he hired himself to a citizen of that country, willing to try every expedient, rather than return to his kind, his merciful father, and humbly confess his faults. His master, from a just contempt of his former prodigality, employed him in the meanest and most contemptible offices; sending him into his field to feed swine. Behold here, ye sons of extravagance, a change indeed! Behold this thoughtless prodigal, reduced at once from a life of voluptuousness and gaiety, a life of pleasure and excess, to a life of the most abject slavery, a life of penury and want! Nay, so great was his hunger, so prodigious his distress, that he would have been contented, in this miserable state, to have satisfied the cravings of hunger with the most indifferent kind of food: but no man relieved him, no man shewed the least compassion for him; so that the very swine were in a better condition than this wretched prodigal.

Thus miserably reduced, he was brought to himself: he had hitherto been in a state of utter forgetfulness; but now began to reflect on his happy condition, while he continued with his father, before he had deviated from the paths of virtue, and to compare it with his present deplorable condition. *How many hired servants of my father, said he to himself, have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger? I will therefore, undeserving as I am, have recourse to his mercy and favour. I will arise and go to my father, for such he still is, and I, though wretched and lost, am yet his son; I will therefore say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before*

† By this feast is represented the Gospel Dispensation, and the bounty and infinite love of God are signified by the greatness of it, and the numbers invited. The *first bidding* implies all the previous notices of the Messiah, by which the law and the prophets were intended to prepare the Jews for the reception of him and his doctrine. The *second bidding*, when *all things were ready*, seems to import all that Jesus did, and taught, and suffered for their conversion and salvation, and all the testimonies and exhortations of his apostles, and other preachers of the Gospel, to the same purpose. The *excuses* sent for their absence are the prejudices and pas-

sions, and worldly interest, which not only hindered those Jews from coming into the faith, but likewise disposed them to treat all attempts to win them over with the utmost obstinacy and contempt. The guests brought in from *abroad* to supply their places are the Gentile World, to whom (after the Jews had thrust it from them) the subsequent tenders of this grace and salvation were made. And he declaring that *none of those who were bidden should taste of this supper* denotes the giving those Jews over to their own perverseness, and leaving them under that infidelity in which they have ever since continued.

before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: that happiness is too great for me to expect or desire; I have, by my behaviour, forfeited all the right I once had in so endearing, so valuable a title: *Make me as one of thy hired servants.* I desire nothing more, than that thou wouldst mercifully receive me even in the humble state of a menial servant.

Having thus made a firm resolution of throwing himself at the feet of his father, and imploring forgiveness for his past offences, he did not delay to put it immediately into execution; he arose, and with the utmost expedition went to his father.

A scene of tenderness and affection, amazingly pathetic, now presents itself to our view! His kind, his affectionate father saw him while he was yet afar off; his bowels yearned towards him, he had compassion on his lost, his ruined child: paternal fondness would not suffer him to forbear, he ran to meet him, he fell on his neck, he kissed him. Encouraged by this kind reception, the son fell down at his father's feet, and began to make confession of his faults, to plead his own unworthiness, to request his father's pardon: *Father, said he, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.*—He was not suffered to proceed any farther, the love of his parent prevented the rest; he commanded his servant to bring the best robe, and put it on him, to put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and to kill the fatted calf, that they might eat and be merry. *For this, my son, said he, was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.*

During this transaction, the elder brother was in the field, properly employed in his father's business; but returning from thence, and hearing the sound of mirth, music, and dancing, he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant? The servant replied, that his younger brother was returned, and that his father had killed the fatted calf, because he had received him safe and sound. This news greatly displeased the elder son; he was very angry, and refused to go in, upon which his father came out and intreated him; but he replied, *Lo! these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment, and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: but as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.* Luke xv. 29, &c.

His father, with the most amiable condescending tenderness, replied, *Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine: it was meet that we should make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.* Though he hath been so indiscreet in his conduct, yet he is both thy brother and my son; thou shouldst not, therefore, be angry, because he has repented, and is returned, after we thought him irrecoverably lost.

Thus beautifully did our Lord represent the work of grace on the heart of man, from the first conviction of sin to the absolute confession of it; shewing at the same time there can be no true confession, without a thorough consciousness of guilt, a sense of our lost state, and an entire

reliance on the mercy of God through Christ our Lord.

By this parable Our Blessed Lord (in the character of the *elder brother*) reproves the unjust murmurings of the Pharisees, who were displeased at his conversing with sinners, though the salvation of such was the main end of his coming into the world.

Having thus exposed the pride and envy of the Pharisees, he next reproved them for their Covetousness, and then proceeded to instruct his disciples in particular, and the multitude in general, what was the proper use they were to make of their riches; which he displayed by relating the following parable of the artful steward. "There was (said he) a certain rich man, who had a steward, and the same was accused unto him, that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, how is it that I hear this of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward." This severe reprimand, and the inward conviction of his own conscience that the accusation was just, obliged the steward to reflect on his own ill mismanagement of his master's affairs, and in what manner he should support himself when discharged from his servitude. "What shall I do? (said he) for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig, to beg I am ashamed." In this manner did he deliberate with himself, and at length resolved on the following expedient, in order to provide for himself after being discharged from his servitude. "I am resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, how much owest thou unto my lord? and he said, an hundred measures of oil: and he said unto him, take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, an hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, take thy bill, and write fourscore."

The instruction Our Lord gave to his disciples from this parable was, not that they should imitate the *injustice*, but the *forecast* and *policy* of this steward, by employing his *earthly* riches to make them friends in the person of the poor, that, when they came to leave this *transitory* world, they might, by these means, be received into *everlasting* habitations in heaven; and that the *children of light* might become as prudent in things relative to their salvation, as the *children of this world* were, in the management of their temporal affairs.

This discourse made little or no impression on the Pharisees: being stupified and intoxicated with sensual pleasures, they were deaf to every argument, however powerful, provided it was levelled against their worldly enjoyments. In order, therefore, to illustrate this truth, confirm his assertion, and rouse these hypocritical wretches from their lethargy, Our Lord delivered the following most beautiful parable of the rich man and the beggar.

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. And there was a cer-
tain

“ tain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid
 “ at his gate full of sores, and desiring to be fed
 “ with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s
 “ table; moreover (so great was his misery, so
 “ exquisite his distress) the dogs came and licked
 “ his sores.” Thus wretched in life, the Al-
 mighty, at last released him, *the beggar died,*
and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bo-
som. Nor could the rich man’s wealth rescue him
 from the same fate, *the rich man also died, and*
was buried. But behold now the great, the aw-
 ful change! *In hell he lift up his eyes, being in*
torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and the late
despised and afflicted Lazarus, in his bosom. In
 this agony of pain and distress, he cried to
 Abraham, begging that he would take pity on
 him, and send Lazarus to give him even the
 least degree of relief, that of dipping the tip of
 his finger in water, to cool his tongue, for his
 torment was intolerable. “ Father Abraham,
 have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he
 may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool
 my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.
 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in
 thy life time receivedst thy good things, and
 likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is com-
 forted, and thou art tormented. And besides all
 this, between us and you there is a great gulf
 fixed; so that they which would pass from hence
 to you, cannot: neither can they pass to us, that
 would come from thence.” Luke xvi 24, &c.

The miserable wretch, finding it impossible to
 procure any relief for himself, was desirous of
 preserving his thoughtless relations from the like
 distress: “ Then he said, I pray thee therefore,
 father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s
 house: for I have five brethren; that he may
 testify unto them, lest they also come into this
 place of torment.” This also was a petition
 that could not be granted. They may learn,
 said Abraham, the certainty of the immortality
 of the soul, from the books of Moses and the
 prophets, if they will give themselves the trou-
 ble to peruse them attentively. To which the
 miserable object replied, that the books of Mo-
 ses and the prophets had been ineffectual to him,
 and he feared would be so to his brethren. But
 if one actually arose from the dead, and appeared
 to them, they would certainly repent, and em-
 brace those offers of salvation they had before
 slighted. *Nay, father Abraham: but if one went*
unto them from the dead, they will repent. But
 Abraham told him, that in this he was greatly
 mistaken; for that if they refused to believe the
 evidence of a future state, contained in the wri-
 tings of Moses and the prophets, the testimony
 of a messenger from the dead would not be suf-
 ficient to convince them. *If they hear not Moses*
and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded
though one rose from the dead.

There certainly is not a more awakening and
 alarming example than this parable, throughout
 the whole of the gospel. It is drawn in such
 lively colours, that many, in all ages of the
 church, have considered it not as a parable, but
 as a real history; but however this be, the im-
 portant truths delivered in it are equally clear,
 and equally certain. They are designed to point
 out the difference between this state and a future,

between the children of this world and the chil-
 dren of light, the former having had the portion
 of happiness here, but that of the latter being
 reserved for a glorious one hereafter.

Among the great numbers of people who at-
 tended Our Lord wherever he went, some came
 out of necessity, others out of curiosity; some
 out of a spirit of devotion, and others out of a
 spirit of captiousness, and with an intent to en-
 snare him from what he might say in his dis-
 courses. Of this last sort were the Scribes and
 Pharisees, who, taking the question of divorces
 to be somewhat intricate, put it to Our Saviour,
 who, limiting the permission of such separations
 to the case of adultery only, reminded them of
 that strict and natural union between man and
 wife, which God had appointed at their first
 creation, and, consequently, was not to be dis-
 annulled by any human institution.

Here the Pharisees, thinking they had got the
 advantage of the argument, mentioned the pre-
 cept of Moses, wherein he permitted the hus-
 band, in many cases, to give a bill of divorce
 to the wife: but to this Our Lord observed,
 that, though under the Mosaic dispensation,
 God, knowing their obstinacy and perverse in-
 clinations, allowed a dispensation on this point,
 by suffering divorces; yet, according to the ori-
 ginal institution of marriage, it was not so; and
 therefore, to reduce the matter to its primary
 establishment, he determined, that all divorces
 for any less cause than that of fornication were
 illegal, and, on both sides, attended with adul-
 tery. On hearing this some of the disciples
 (thinking the engagement of too rigorous a na-
 ture) began to express their dislike of marriage;
 upon which Our Lord told them, that with those
 who had the gift of continency a single life was
 the more conducive towards the attainment of
 the kingdom of heaven; but that those who had
 it not, and thought proper to marry, ought, by
 all means, to adhere to the first institution.

After this Our Lord reminded his disciples of
 several things he had instructed them in before,
 viz. of the impossibility of preventing scandals
 and offences; of the duty of forgiving our bro-
 ther his repeated transgressions; of the necessity
 and efficacy of faith, in order to be heard in our
 requests to God; of humility in the performance
 of our duty, because at the best we are but un-
 profitable servants, and especially of humility in
 our addresses to God, for which he gave them a
 parabolical instance in the behaviour of a Pharisee
 and Publican, who went at the same time to the
 temple to worship.

The Pharisee, having an high opinion of his
 own righteousness, went far into the court of the
 temple, and there offered up his praises to God
 in these words: *God (said he) I thank thee that*
I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust,
adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice
in the week, I give tyths of all that I possess.
 Having thus wrapped himself up in his own
 righteousness, he cast a scornful look at the poor
 publican, and then departed the temple.

But how different was the behaviour of the
 humble publican? Impressed with a deep sense of
 his own unworthiness, he would not even enter
 the courts of the temple; but stood afar off,
 and

and smote upon his breast, and in the bitterness of his soul, earnestly implored the mercy of Omnipotence; *And the publican standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast: saying, God, be merciful to me a sinner.* Luke xviii. 13.

Specious as the Pharisee's behaviour may seem, his prayer was an abomination to the Lord; while the poor publican, who confessed his guilt, and implored mercy, was justified in the sight of God, rather than this arrogant boaster. The parable sufficiently indicates, that all the sons of men stand in need of mercy: both the strict Pharisee, and the despised publican, with the whole race of mankind, are sinners; and consequently all must implore pardon of their benevolent Creator. We must all ascend to the temple, and there pour forth our prayers before the throne of grace; for there he has promised ever to be present, and to grant the petitions of all who ask with sincerity and truth, through the Son of his love.

The Pharisees, who waited for the coming of the Messiah, and had formed a romantic notion that he would appear with the utmost glory of a temporal prince, demanded of Our Lord *when the kingdom of God (whereof he had told them so much) was to appear?* In answer to this Our Lord told them, "that it should not appear with any outward pomp or splendor, as they vainly imagined; and that, in truth, it was already begun among them, though they had no discernment of it."

Having thus answered the Pharisees, Our Lord, turning himself to his disciples, strictly cautioned them not to be deluded by false Christs and false prophets, who would pretend to shew them the kingdom of God where it was not. He told them, that, before he could enter into his glorified state, he was to suffer many things, and be rejected by the Jews; but that, after his death, he would give incontestable proofs of his power and dominion, by the wonderful propagation of his Gospel, and by the vengeance he should take on the Jewish nation. He therefore exhorted them not to imitate the security of the people in Noah's time, or of the inhabitants of Sodom, nor to express any concern for the destruction of

their country, as did Lot's wife for the burning of Sodom; but to use their utmost care and diligence (when they saw the Roman armies advancing) not to be involved in the general calamity. And because, in involving some, and preserving others, there would be much of God's distinguishing Providence concerned, he therefore exhorted them to pray without fainting, or being discouraged at any thing; and to this purpose he propounded to them a parable the substance of which was to the following effect.

In a certain city lived a judge, who being governed by atheistical principles, had no regard to the precepts of religion, and being very powerful did not care what was said of him by man: so that all his decisions were influenced merely by passion or interest. In the same city was also a widow, who, having no friends to assist her, was absolutely unable to defend herself from injuries, or procure redress for any she had received. In this deplorable situation she had recourse to the unjust judge, in order to obtain satisfaction for some oppressive wrong she had lately received; but the judge was so abandoned to pleasure, that he refused, for a time, to listen to her request; he would not give himself the trouble to examine her case, though the crying injustice pleaded so powerfully for this distressed widow. She was not, however, intimidated by his refusal; she incessantly importuned him, till, by repeated representations of her distress, he was wrought upon to do her justice, merely to free himself from her importunities. "Though" (said he to himself) "I fear not God, nor regard man; yet, because this widow troubleth me, I will see her righted, lest, by her continual coming, she weary me."

The sentiment conveyed by Our Blessed Saviour, in this parable, is very beautiful. We hence learn, that the cries of the afflicted will, by being incessantly repeated, make an impression even on the stony hearts of wicked men, who glory in their impiety, and laugh at the precepts of justice, virtue, and religion: and, therefore, cannot fail of being regarded by the benevolent Father of the universe, who listens to the petitions of his faithful servants, and pours on their heads the choicest of his blessings.

C H A P. X.

Our Lord leaves Galilee, and, crossing the river Jordan, enters Perea, where he cures great numbers of people afflicted with various disorders. He kindly receives the little children brought to him to partake of his Divine benediction. Shews to the people the great danger of riches, and the rewards of a faithful adherence to him and his religion; which he displays under the parable of labourers in a vineyard. Is applied to by Martha and Mary in behalf of their brother Lazarus, who is sick; upon which Our Lord goes to Bethany. In his way he cures Bartimeus, a blind man, and dines with Zaccheus, a publican, at whose house he delivers the parable of the servants entrusted with their lord's money. He arrives at Bethany, and raises Lazarus from the dead, to the great astonishment of all the spectators. The news of this miracle reaching Jerusalem, the Sanhedrim form the resolution of having him put to death, upon which he retires, for a short time, to Ephraim, a small place belonging to the tribe of Benjamin. He leaves Ephraim, and proceeds towards Jerusalem, in his way to which he stops at Bethany, and sups with Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. During his stay Mary testifies her obedience, humility and respect, by anointing his feet with odoriferous perfume, and afterwards wiping them with the hair of her head. Judas Iscariot repines at the loss of the valuable ointment, for which Our Lord, after commending Mary's conduct, rebukes him for his avarice. Our Lord makes his public entry into Jerusalem, amidst the universal acclamations of the people, and on his near approach to the city publicly laments its impending fate.

AFTER Our Lord had been, for some time, preaching the doctrine of salvation in different parts of Galilee, he removed to Perea, a most beautiful district situated on the east side of the river Jordan. Here he was followed by prodigious multitudes of people, whom he both taught, and cured of the respective distempers with which they were afflicted. In consequence of this many persons, thinking, perhaps, that his power would be as great in preventing, as in removing, disorders, brought their children to him, requesting that he would put his hands upon them, and bless them. Our Lord's disciples, thinking it below the dignity of their Master to be disturbed and interrupted by infants, at first refused admittance to those who brought them; which being observed by Jesus, he reprov'd them for so doing, and withal recommended the innocence and simplicity of those babes as a pattern for their imitation. *Suffer (says he) little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God.* He then ordered the children to be brought before him, which being done, he laid his hands upon them, and blessed them; and having given some beneficial instructions to the multitude, he dismissed them, and departed.

A short time after this a young person of great distinction and wealth, and who was likewise a ruler of the synagogue, meeting with Our Lord, desired to know of him what he was to do in order to attain eternal life. *Good master (said he) what good things shall I do, that I may have eternal life?* Though this young ruler appeared to pay great honour to Our Lord, yet he was far from being sincere in his heart: for though he stiled him *good*, yet he did not believe that he was sent from God, as sufficiently appears

from his refusing to observe the counsel given him. Our Lord well knew his secret intentions, and was perfectly acquainted with the inmost recesses of his heart; and accordingly rebuked him for his hypocritical address before he answered his question. *Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God.* But as he had desired the advice of Our Lord, who never refused it to any of the sons of men, he readily answered his question, by telling him that he must pay a strict attention to all the moral precepts of the law, and in particular to the commandments of the second table, which would be a certain sign of his keeping those of the first. The young ruler replied, that all these he had made it his study to observe from his youth; upon which our Lord, who knew his covetous temper, and was willing to touch him to the quick, told him, that if he was desirous of aiming at perfection in religion, his only way would be to sell his estate, give it to the poor, and come and be one of his disciples. *If thou wilt be perfect (said he) go and sell that thou hast, and give it to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.* But the young ruler's heart was so fixed upon his riches, that he could not listen to this advice: he therefore went away very pensive and melancholy, being loth to part with his then possessions for any treasure in reversion.

This melancholy instance of the pernicious influence of riches over the minds of the children of men, induced Our Lord to caution his disciples against things of such injurious tendency; which he did by shewing them how very difficult it was for a rich man to procure an habitation in the regions of eternal happiness. *Verily (said he) I say unto you, it is easier for a camel*

camel * to go through the eye of a needle; than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them; With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible. Matth. xix. 23, &c.

This answer of the Blessed Jesus was; however, far from satisfying his disciples; who had, doubtless, often reflected with pleasure on the high posts they were to enjoy in their Master's kingdom. Peter, who appears to have been particularly disappointed, addressed his Master in the name of the rest, begging him to remember that his apostles had actually done what the young ruler had refused: They had abandoned their relations, their friends, their possessions, and their employments; on his account: and therefore they desired to know what reward they were to expect for these instances of their obedience.

In answer to this Our Blessed Lord told Peter that they should not fail of a reward even in this life, for immediately after his resurrection, when he ascended to his Father, and entered on his mediatorial office, they should be advanced to the honour of judging the twelve tribes of Israel; that is, of ruling the church of Christ, which they were to plant in different parts of the earth. *Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* Matth. xix. 28.

Having given this answer to Peter, Our Lord next mentioned the rewards his other disciples should receive both in this world and the next, which he expressed in words to this effect: Those who have given up all for my sake shall be no losers in the end: their benevolent Father will not fail to support them during their long and painful journey to the happy Canaan, and raise them up friends who shall assist them with those necessities they might have expected from their relations, had they not left them for my sake. Divine Providence will take care that they have every thing valuable that could be given them by their relations, or they could desire from large possessions. They shall, indeed, be fed with the bread of sorrow; but this shall produce joys, to which all the earthly pleasures bear no proportion; and, in the end, obtain everlasting life. They shall leave this vale of sorrow behind them, and fly to the mansions of their heavenly Father, the fountain of life and joy, where they shall be infinitely rewarded for all the sufferings they have undergone in this world. *And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But*

many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first. Matth. xix. 29, &c.

But, lest the disciples should not perfectly understand what he meant by the expression *the first shall be last; and the last first*, he delivered to them the following parable of the householder, who, at different hours of the day, hired labourers to work in his vineyard. "The kingdom of heaven (says Our Blessed Lord) is like unto a man that is an householder; which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day; he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market-place, and said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, and said unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the good man of the house, Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst thou not agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen."

Such is the parable of the householder as delivered by Our Saviour, and, from the applications contained in it, may be thus interpreted. The dispensation of religion, which God gave to mankind, in different parts of the world, are represented by the vineyard. The Jews, who were early members of the true church, and obliged to obey the law of Moses, are the labourers which the householder hired early in the morning. The Gentiles, who were converted at several times, by the various interpositions of Providence, to the knowledge and worship of the true God, are the labourers hired at the third, sixth and ninth hours. And the invitation given at the eleventh hour implies the calling of persons in

* The expression, *it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle*, was a common proverb among the Jews, to express the great difficulty of a thing. The meaning is not, that it is impossible, but that, comparatively speaking, it is very difficult for those who are continually surrounded with pleasure, and grandeur, and temptations of this world, to preserve that habitual virtuous disposition of mind, which

is necessary to qualify men for the life to come. The *deceitfulness* of riches blinds the eyes of men; the *pleasures* of life steal from them their understandings; *power* is very apt to lead them into ambition and tyranny; *plenty* into intemperance; and continual *prosperity* into a careless spirit, and a neglect and forgetfulness of God.

in the eve of life to the knowledge of the Gospel. The law of Moses was a heavy yoke; and therefore the obedience to its precepts was very clearly represented by those who bore the heat and burthen of the whole day. But the proselyte Gentiles paid obedience only to some particular precepts of the law; bore but part of its weight; and were therefore represented by those who were hired at the third, sixth and ninth hours: while those who regulated their conduct by the law of nature only, and esteemed the works of justice, piety, temperance, and charity, as their whole duty, are beautifully represented as labouring only one hour. When the evening was come, and each labourer was to receive his wages, they were all placed upon an equal footing, these rewards being the privileges and advantages of the Gospel. The Jews, who had borne the yoke of the Mosaic ceremonies, murmured when they found the Gentiles were admitted to its privileges, without being subject to their ceremonial worship. But we must not urge the circumstance of the reward so far as to imagine that either Jews or Gentiles merited the blessings of the Gospel, by their having laboured faithfully in the vineyard, or having behaved as they ought to have done under their several dispensations. The glorious gospel, with all its blessings, was bestowed entirely by the free grace of God, and without any thing in men to merit it; besides, it was offered promiscuously to all whether good or bad, and embraced by persons of all characters. The conclusion, therefore, of this beautiful parable deserves our utmost attention: we should often seriously meditate upon it, and be careful of endeavouring, by every means in our power, *to make our calling and election sure.*

The celebration of the feast of the Passover being near at hand, Our Lord determined, in his own mind, to leave Perea, and proceed towards Jerusalem, in order to be present at that ceremony. Before, however, he left Perea, he received a message from Martha and Mary, two sisters who lived at Bethany, informing him that their brother Lazarus, for whom Our Lord had a peculiar respect, was dangerous ill, and that there were little hopes of his recovery. But Our Blessed Lord did not, for wise reasons to himself, pay immediate attention to this message, by going with all haste to the relief of the person diseased. He intended, on this occasion, to manifest the glory of God, as well as his own Divine power and mission, by a greater miracle than that of a simple cure, and therefore delayed going until Lazarus was dead.

Two days after this Our Lord left Perea, and proceeded towards Bethany, which was in the direct road to Jerusalem. On the way he called his apostles aside, told them where he intended to go, and what would be the consequence. He repeated the prophecies concerning his future sufferings; and added, that though they should put him to death, yet that circumstance, instead of weakening, should increase their faith, especially as he would rise again the third day from the dead. "Behold (said he) we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets, concerning the Son of man, shall be accomplished: for he shall be delivered unto the

Gentiles and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: and they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again." Luke xviii. 32, 33.

As this prediction manifestly tended to the confirmation of the antient prophecies, it must have given the greatest encouragement to his disciples had they understood and applied it in a proper manner; but they were so unacquainted with the Scriptures, that they had not any idea of what he meant. *And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them; neither knew they the things which were spoken.*

James and John (the two sons of Zebedee) were in particular so ignorant that they thought their Master, by his telling them he would rise again from the dead, meant that he would then erect his empire; and therefore, at the instigation of their mother, begged that he would confer on them the chief posts in his kingdom; which they expressed, by desiring to be seated, the one *on his right hand, and the other on his left.*

The two apostles, James and John, had, ever since Our Lord's Transfiguration, conceived very high notions of his kingdom, and, possibly, of their own merit also, because they, in particular had been admitted to behold that miracle. But Jesus told them, they were ignorant of the nature of the honour they requested; and since they desired to share with him in glory, asked them, *If they were willing to share with him also in his sufferings: Ye know not what ye ask; are ye able to drink of the cup that I drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?* Matth. xx. 22.

These two disciples, ravished with the prospect of the dignity they were aspiring after, replied, without hesitation, that they were both able and willing to share any hardship their Master might meet with, in the way to the kingdom. To which he replied, that they should certainly share with him his troubles and afflictions; but that they had asked a favour which was not his to give. "Ye shall drink, indeed, of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." Matth. xx. 23.

This ambitious request of the two brothers raised the indignation of the rest of the disciples, who thinking themselves equally deserving the principal posts in the Messiah's kingdom, were highly offended at the arrogance of the sons of Zebedee. Jesus, therefore, in order to restore harmony among his disciples, told them that his kingdom was very different from those of the present world, and the greatness of his disciples did not, like that of secular princes, consist in reigning over others in an absolute and despotic manner. "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great, exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Matth. xx. 25, &c.

Our

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



(CHRIST restoring BARTIMEUS to SIGHT)

Our Blessed Lord having thus argued to undeceive his apostles relative to the notions they entertained of the kingdom he was about to establish, proceeded on his journey towards Jerusalem. As he drew near to Jericho, attended by a numerous company, one Bartimeus, a blind man (who had long sat by the way-side begging, the only method he had of supporting a wretched existence) hearing the noise of a prodigious concourse of people passing by; and being informed that Jesus of Nazareth was among them, called aloud that he would *have mercy upon him*. The people who accompanied Our Lord, supposing that the man asked alms, bade him cease his noise: but the benefit which he desired was of greater moment, and therefore, raising his voice he, with more importunity, cried, *Have mercy upon me, O Lord, thou Son of David*.

This important request, and the manner of its being made, had the desired effect. Our Lord stood still, and called him to him, that, by his manner of walking, spectators might be convinced he was really blind. As soon as he approached Our Lord asked him what he requested with such earnestness? To which the beggar answered, that he might receive his sight. *What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?* He said, *Lord, that my eyes may be opened*. Having said this Our Blessed Lord touched his eyes, which he had no sooner done than he immediately received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God.

As Our Lord was passing through Jericho, a certain man, named Zaccheus, of great wealth and figure among the publicans, was very anxious to see him; but, as he was a man of low stature, and could not gratify his curiosity in the crowd, he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree, where he could not fail of having a full view of him. When Our Lord approached the place where he was, *he looked up and saw him, and said unto him, Zaccheus make haste, and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house*. Luke xix. 5.

The publican immediately obeyed the Divine command, expressed his joy at Our Lord's great condescension, and taking him to his house, shewed him all the marks of civility and respect in his power. But when the people saw Our Lord was going to the house of a publican, they condemned his conduct, as not being conformable to the character of a prophet. Zaccheus heard the unjust reflections the people threw on him; and therefore was willing to justify himself before Jesus and his attendants. *And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold*. And Jesus said unto him, *This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is the son of Abraham*. Our Lord, farther to convince the people that the design of his mission was to seek and to restore life and salvation to lost and perishing sinners, added, *The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost*.

While Our Lord continued in the house of Zaccheus he spoke a parable to his disciples, who, knowing his intentions of going to Jerusalem,

vainly imagined, on his arrival there, that he would seat himself upon his throne, and assume his regal authority. The parable, therefore, which he delivered at this time, and which was designed to remove all such thoughts from their minds, was to the following effect: "A certain great man, born heir to a kingdom; went into a far country to take possession of it; but before he departed, he called his servants together, and gave each a sum of money to trade withal, until he should return. The reason of his journey to this foreign land was, because his own countrymen over whom he had a right to reign were obstinately set against him, and disclaimed him for their king. When, therefore, he had obtained his new kingdom, and returned home, he first called his servants, with whom he had entrusted his money, to an account, rewarding the diligent with gifts proportionate to their improvements, and punishing the negligent; and then taking cognizance of such of his countrymen, who, upon his going to be enthroned in another kingdom, disclaimed all obedience to him, he ordered them, in his presence, to be put to death as so many rebels."

In this parable are delineated the characters of three different sorts of men; namely, the true disciples of the Messiah, the hypocrites, and the openly profane: and the treatment these servants met with represent the final sentences that will be passed upon them by the awful judge of the whole earth. The true disciples shall be rewarded with the honours and pleasures of immortality; the hypocrites stripped of all the advantages they so often boasted, and loaded with infamy; and the open enemies of Christ shall suffer punishment severe in proportion to the degree of their guilt.

But though this is the general sense of the parable, yet it has also a particular relation to the time when it was spoken; and intended to teach the disciples, that though they might imagine the Messiah's kingdom was speedily to be erected, and they were soon to partake of its happiness, yet this was not to take place till after the death of their Master; and that they themselves must perform a long and laborious course of services, before they received their eternal reward. That after his resurrection, when he had obtained the kingdom, he would return from his seat of majesty, and reckon with all his servants, and reward every one according to the improvements he had made in the trust committed to his care: and that he would execute, in an exemplary manner, his vengeance on those who rejected his government, and did all in their power to hinder the erection of his kingdom among others.

After Our Lord had delivered this parable, he left the house of Zaccheus the publican, and prosecuted his journey towards Jerusalem. By the time that he arrived at Bethany, Lazarus had been dead and buried four days; and several friends and relations from Jerusalem were come to condole with the two sisters, Martha and Mary, for the loss of their brother. On the first news of Our Lord's approach Martha went out to meet him, but Mary, who was of a more melancholy and contemplative disposition, sat still in the house. As soon as Martha came

into the presence of Jesus, she poured forth her complaints in these words: *Lord (said she) if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.* She, doubtless, entertained an high opinion of Our Saviour's power: she believed that death did not dare to approach his presence; and consequently, if Jesus had arrived at Bethany, before her brother's dissolution, he had not fallen a victim to the king of terrors. But she imagined that it was not in his power to heal the sick at a distance; though, at the same time, she seemed to have some dark and imperfect hopes, that Our Blessed Lord would still do something for her. *But I know,* said she, *that even now whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.* She thought that Jesus could obtain whatsoever he desired by prayer; and therefore did not found her hopes on his power, but on the power of God through his intercession. She, doubtless, knew that the great Redeemer of mankind had raised the daughter of Jairus, and the widow's son at Nain, from the dead; but seems to have considered her brother's resurrection as much more difficult, probably, because he had been longer dead.

In order to give encouragement to Martha's imperfect faith, Our Lord told her, *Thy brother shall rise again.* As these words were delivered in an indefinite sense, with regard to time, Martha understood them only as an argument of consolation, drawn from the general resurrection, and accordingly answered, *I know that he shall rise again at the resurrection, at the last day.* She was firmly persuaded of that important article of the Christian faith, *the resurrection of the dead*; at which time she believed her brother would rise from the chambers of the dust. And here she seems to have terminated all her hopes, not thinking that Our Lord would, at this time, call her brother from the sleep of death. Jesus, therefore, to instruct her in that great truth, told her, *I am the resurrection and the life.* I am the author of the resurrection, the fountain and giver of that life they shall then receive; and therefore can, with the same ease, raise the dead now, as at the last day. *He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this?* To which Martha replied, *Yea, Lord; I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.* I believe that thou art the true Messiah, so long promised by the prophets, and therefore believe thou art capable of performing every instance of power thou art pleased to claim.

Martha now seemed to entertain some confused expectations of her brother's immediate resurrection, and, leaving Jesus, ran hastily to inform her sister of all that had passed. Mary no sooner heard that Our Lord was so near, than she immediately left her relations and friends (who only increased the weight of her grief) and with her sister flew to her Saviour. The Jews, who suspected they were going to weep over the grave of their brother, immediately followed them, and were eye-witnesses of the great miracle performed on the deceased Lazarus.

No sooner did Mary approach the great Redeemer of mankind, than she fell prostrate at his feet, and, in a flood of tears, poured forth her

complaint in the same words which had been before used by her sister: *Lord (said she) if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.* No wonder the compassionate Jesus was moved at so affecting a scene; on his side stood Martha, pouring forth a flood of tears, at his feet lay the affectionate Mary, weeping and lamenting her dear departed brother: while the Jews who came to comfort the afflicted sisters, unable to confine their grief, joined the solemn mourning, and mixed their friendly tears, in witness of their love for the departed Lazarus, and in testimony to the justice of the sisters grief for the loss of so amiable, so deserving a brother. Jesus could not behold the affliction of the two sisters, and their friends, without having a share in it himself; his heart was melted at the mournful scene, *he groaned in spirit and was troubled.*

In order to remove the doubts and fears of these pious women, Our Lord asked them where they had buried Lazarus? To which they replied, *Lord, come and see.* On this Our Lord to shew his compassionate disposition for the distressed, and to point out to us, that the tender affections of the human heart, when kept in due bounds, that friendly sorrow, when not immoderate, and when directed to proper ends, is consistent with the highest sanctity of the soul, joined in the general mourning; which he testified by the shedding of tears.

When the Jews saw Our Lord weep, they were convinced that he loved Lazarus exceedingly; but some of them interpreted this circumstance to his disadvantage, for, according to their mean way of judging, they imagined that he had suffered him to fall by the stroke of death for no other reason but for want of power to rescue him. And, thinking the miracle said to have been wrought on Bartimeus at least as difficult as the curing an acute distemper, they called the former in question, because the latter had been neglected. *Could not this man (said they) which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?*

The Blessed Jesus, regardless of their question, but grieving at the hardness of their heart, and blindness of their infidelity, groaned again within himself, as he walked towards the sepulchre of the dead. At his coming to the grave, he said, *Take away the stone*; upon which Martha answered, *Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days*; intimating that her brother's resurrection was not, on that account, to be expected. But Jesus gave her a solemn reproof, to teach her that there was not any thing impossible with God; and that his power is not to be circumscribed within the narrow bounds of human reason. *Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?* As if he had said, have but faith, and I will display before thee the wonderful works of Divine Providence.

Martha's objections being thus obviated, she, with the rest, waited the great event in silence; and, in pursuance of the command of the Son of God, took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. Jesus had, on many occasions, publicly appealed to his own miracles, as the proofs of his mission, though he did not generally make a formal address to his Father, before

before he worked those miracles. But being now to raise Lazarus from the dead, he prayed for his resurrection, to convince the spectators that it could not be effected, without an immediate interposition of the Divine power. *Father* (said he) *I thank thee that thou hast heard me, and I knew that thou hearest me always; but because of the people which stand by, I said it; that they may believe that thou hast sent me.* John xi. 41; &c. I entertained no doubt of thy empowering me to do this miracle, and therefore did not pray, for my own sake; I well knew that thou hearest me always. I prayed for the sake of the people, to convince them that thou lovest me, hast sent me, and art continually with me.

After Our Blessed Lord had returned thanks to his Father for this opportunity of displaying his glory, *He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.* This efficacious call of the Son of God awakened the dead: the breathless clay was instantly re-animated; and he who had lain four days in the chambers of the tomb obeyed immediately the powerful mandate. *And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin: Jesus saith unto them, loose him, and let him go.*

Had Our Blessed Lord, by his powerful word, unloosed the napkin wherewith Lazarus was bound before he came out of the sepulchre, it might have lessened the strength of the miracle in the eyes of the spectators. But he brought him out in the same manner he had been lying, and ordered them to loose him, that they might be better convinced of the miracle; for, in taking off the grave-clothes they had the fullest evidence of his death and resurrection. On the one hand, the manner in which he was swathed must soon have killed him had he been alive when buried; which consequently demonstrated, beyond all exception, that Lazarus had been dead several days before Jesus called him again to life. On the other hand, by the appearance of his lively countenance when the napkin was removed, his fresh colour, and his active vigour, those who came near, and handled him, must be convinced that he was in perfect health, and, therefore, had the opportunity of proving the truth of the miracle by the closest examination.

There is something exceeding beautiful in the manner of Our Lord's behaviour on this occasion. He did not utter one upbraiding word either to the doubting sisters, or the malicious Jews; nor did he let fall one word of triumph or exultation. *Loose him and let him go* were the only words we have recorded. He was in this, as on all other occasions, consistent with himself—a pattern of perfect humility and absolute self-denial.

Such was the astonishing work wrought by the Son of God at Bethany; and in the resurrection of Lazarus, who was corrupted, and thus raised by the powerful call of the Blessed Redeemer of mankind, we have a striking emblem, and a glorious earnest, of the resurrection of our bodies from the grave at the last day, when the same powerful mandate which spoke Lazarus again into being, shall collect the scattered particles of our bodies, and raise them to immortality.

This great and apparent miracle caused the

utmost surprize and astonishment among all the spectators, and the greatest part of them were, from that time, convinced, and firmly believed, that our Lord could be no other than the great Messiah so long promised by the antient prophets; but others, who still expected a temporal prince, and were therefore unwilling to acknowledge him for their Saviour, were filled with indignation, and, in a malicious manner, went and reported what had happened to the Pharisees at Jerusalem, particularly the chief priests and elders. In consequence of this a council was immediately summoned to deliberate what measures were most expedient to be taken on the occasion. The last miracle, as well as all the rest Our Lord had wrought in confirmation of his mission, was too evident to be denied; and therefore, as they could not find any just accusation against him, they pretended that his whole intention was, to establish a new sect in religion, which would endanger both their church and nation. *Then gathered the chief priests and Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him then alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.* John xi. 47. The common people, astonished at his miracles, will, if we do not take care to prevent it, certainly set him up for the Messiah; and the Romans, under pretence of a rebellion, will deprive us both of our liberty and religion.

The greater part of the council now proposed that Jesus should be put to death; but some few, who were Our Lord's disciples, strongly objected to it, urging the injustice of such an act, from the consideration of his miracles and the purity of his life. This, however, was over-ruled by Caiphas the high-priest, who, from a principle of human policy, told them, that the nature of government often required certain acts of injustice, in order to preserve the safety of the state. *Ye know nothing at all* (said he) *nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.* In consequence of this the proposition made by the greater part of the council was agreed to; and, from that time, they entered into a combination to have him apprehended, and put to death.

It was not long before Our Blessed Lord, (who was at this time at Bethany) received information of the transactions that had taken place in the council at Jerusalem; upon which (as his hour was not yet come) he avoided their malicious designs by retreating from Bethany, and retiring to a small place called Ephraim, belonging to the tribe of Benjamin, where he continued, for a few days, with his apostles, till the time was near at hand for celebrating the Feast of the Passover at Jerusalem.

Six days before that solemn feast began, Our Lord, in his way to the city, called at Bethany, where he was kindly entertained at supper by Martha and Mary, the two sisters of Lazarus. Martha (according to her custom) dressed the supper: Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead, was one of the company that sat at table with him, while Mary, to express her love and bounty, took a vial of the most valuable essence, made

made of spikenard, and, pouring it upon his feet, anointed them, and wiped them with her hair, so that the whole house was filled with the fragrantcy of its perfume. This action Judas Iscariot (who afterwards betrayed his master, and had, at that time, the care of the bag wherein money for charitable, and other necessary uses, was kept) highly blamed, as a piece of prodigality, in throwing away what might have been sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor; not that he valued the poor, but because he was a covetous wretch, and was always purloining some part of the public money to himself. Our Lord, therefore, who knew the sincerity of Mary's, and the baseness of Judas's heart, in a very gentle reply, commended what Mary had done, as a seasonable ceremony to solemnize his approaching death; but blamed Judas's pretended concern for the poor, since objects of that kind they had always with them, but his continuance among them was not to be long. *Then said Jesus, Let her alone; against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you: but me ye have not always.* John xii. 2, &c.

While Our Lord continued at Lazarus's house, great numbers of Jews, out of curiosity, came to Bethany, not only to have a sight of Jesus, but also of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. But, when the Sanhedrim understood this, and that the resurrection of Lazarus had occasioned many people to believe on Jesus, they consulted how to destroy *him* likewise.

Our Blessed Lord, after tarrying all night at Bethany, set forward, the next morning, with his disciples and others who attended him, on his way to Jerusalem. When he came near to a place called Bethphage, on the side of the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples into the village, to bring from thence an ass, and her colt, which was not yet backed, that, to accomplish a remarkable prophecy*, he might

ride thereon to Jerusalem†. The disciples did as they were ordered; and, having mounted their Master on the colt, he proceeded as it were, in triumph towards the city, amidst the loud acclamations of an innumerable multitude, whilst crowds of people came forth to meet him, with branches of palm-trees in their hands, some spreading their garments in the way, others cutting down branches, and strewing them where he was to pass, and all, as it were with one voice, crying, *Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the Highest!*

On Our Lord's arrival at the descent of the Mount of Olives, his disciples, being transported with the honours shewn to their Master, broke out into raptures of thanksgivings, and loud doxologies to God, for all the mighty works which they had seen, while the whole body of the people, as well those that went before, as those that followed after, joined with the disciples in their Hosannas and acclamations. In consequence of this some of the chief of the Pharisees, being envious of Our Lord's glory, desired him to command their silence. To which he replied, *I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.* Luke xix. 40.

When Our Lord had advanced so near to Jerusalem as to have a full view of the city and temple, he stopped, and looking stedfastly on the city, with tears in his eyes, made a lamentation over it to this effect: "Oh! that thou hadst known, at least in this thy appointed day, the things conducive to thy peace! But now, alas! they are hidden from thine eyes. For the fatal time shall come, when thy enemies shall throw up trenches about thee, hem thee in on every side, destroy thy children, demolish thee, and not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou wouldest not know the time of thy visitation."

* See Zechariah ix. 9.

† It has been a matter of some argument among the learned, whether Our Lord rode upon the ass, or the colt, or both alternately; but the latter appears evidently to have been the case, as will be seen by the following observations. In the words of the prophet Zechariah, mention is made of riding both upon an ass, and a colt, *the sole of an ass*; and from St. Matthew (chap. xxi. 7.) it is farther observed, that the disciples, having brought the ass and the colt, which Our Saviour had sent them for, put on them their cloaths, and set

him thereon. Since, therefore, the relation of St. Matthew thus literally agrees with the prophecy of Zechariah, and both expressly assert, that Our Saviour did ride upon the ass, as well as the colt, there cannot be any reason why these texts should not be taken in their most plain and obvious meaning; and that we should, from thence, conclude, that, for the more exact fulfilment of the prophecy, Our Saviour did actually ride, part of the way on the one, and the remaining part upon the other.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



JOHN, XII. 3.

(MARY, the Sister of Lazarus, ANOINTING the FEET)
of OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR, and wiping them with her Hair.



OUR SAVIOUR *riding to* JERUSALEM
previous to the Feast of the Passover.

C H A P. XI.

Our Blessed Lord drives the dealers of several kinds out of the temple, and at the same time cure many people of their respective infirmities. Acquaints his disciples with his approaching death, and testifies his resignation to it. Denounces a judgment upon a fig-tree. Argues with the chief priests and Scribes in the temple, reproves them for their conduct, and delivers several parables on the occasion. Answers a captious question put to him by the Sadducees and Pharisees. Settles the most important points of the law. Exposés the vices of the Scribes and Pharisees, and foretells the judgment that will fall upon them. Commends a widow woman for contributing her mite to the public treasury. Predicts the destruction of the temple, and informs his apostles of the signs which should precede that event. Exhorts his disciples to watchfulness and prayer, which he enforces by delivering two parables; one of the Wise and foolish Virgins; and the other, of the talents entrusted with diligent and slothful servants.

THE entrance of Our Blessed Lord into Jerusalem with such a prodigious retinue of people greatly alarmed the citizens, and an universal enquiry was made amongst them who he was, and from whence he came: in answer to which they were told by the multitude, who proclaimed it aloud, and in a manner that expressed the great satisfaction they felt on the occasion, that it was *Jesus the prophet of Nazareth, of Galilee.*

The first thing Our Lord did after his entrance into Jerusalem was, to go to the temple, accompanied by his disciples and a great multitude of people, where, looking about him, he found the Court of the Gentiles notoriously prophaned and dishonoured by trading and merchandize. That he might, therefore, end his ministry as he had begun it, with the reformation of his Father's house, he drove out all the buyers and sellers (who traded in various articles) from the sacred ground: he overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the stalls of those who sold doves, telling them that they had made the temple, which was deservedly called an *House of Prayer, a Den of Thieves.*

After Our Blessed Lord had drove this venal clan out of the temple, there were brought unto him many persons that were blind, lame, and otherwise afflicted; all of whom he instantly relieved of their respective complaints. The multitude were filled with admiration at the sight of these wonderful acts; but the chief priests and Scribes, when they saw the miracles which he wrought, and heard the acclamations of the people (more especially of the children, who cried out, *Hosanna to the Son of David!*) they were greatly enraged, and discovered their anger by asking Our Lord, If he had heard what they said? But he silenced their question by shewing them, that, what was so displeasing to them, did really fulfil the Scriptures, particularly that passage in the Psalmist, where it is said, *Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength.* Psal. viii. 2. This answer, however, did but enrage them the more, and put them upon seeking all occasions to destroy him, though their dread of the people (who were exceeding

numerous, and heard him with the greatest eagerness and attention) prevented them, for some time, from carrying their base designs into execution.

During the time Our Blessed Lord continued in the temple, certain profelyted Greeks, who came up to worship at Jerusalem, being desirous to have a sight of Christ, addressed themselves to Philip, one of the apostles, who, by the assistance of Andrew, introduced them into the temple. At this time Our Lord was discoursing to his disciples on many things relative to his Passion, and, particularly, of the efficacy of his death, and what a powerful means it would prove to convert the people of the world to his religion; more powerful, indeed, than his life could possibly be, even as corn, though it dies in the ground when sown, rises again with great abundance. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.* John xii. 24. He farther told them, that since it was absolutely necessary for him to suffer the pains of death before he ascended the throne of his glory; so they, as his followers, must also expect to be persecuted and spitefully used for his name-sake; but if they persevered, and even resolved to lose their lives in his service, he would reward their constancy with a crown of glory. He likewise intimated to the strangers, that if their desire of conversing with him proceeded from any expectations of obtaining from him temporal preferments, they would find themselves greatly disappointed. *If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.* John xii. 26.

While Our Blessed Lord was thus discoursing on his death, he seemed, on a sudden, to be seized with a natural agitation on its approaching hour, and even went so far as to request of God a reprieve from it. *Now, (said he) is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour.* But, recollecting that it was for this purpose he came into the world, he changed his petition, and, with a resolved acquiescence in God's good pleasure, begged of

him to demonstrate his own heavenly glory to the people: *Father, said he, glorify thy name.* Scarce had he uttered these words, when he was answered, by an audible voice from heaven, *I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.* The miracles thou hast already performed have glorified my name; and I will still farther glorify it by other miracles to be wrought before the sons of men.

This voice (which in loudness resembled thunder, and was sufficiently articulate to be understood by all present) Our Lord told his hearers was not so much for his own information of the will of heaven, as it was, to convince them of his Divine mission. *This voice, said he, came not because of me, but for your sakes.* It came to confirm what I have told you relating to my sufferings, death, resurrection, and the conversion of the whole Gentile world to the Christian religion.

Having said this, Our Lord told his disciples that the time was at hand, when the kingdom of Satan should be destroyed, and that of the Messiah exalted. *Now (said he) is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.* The people, not understanding the force of this affirmation, replied, *We have heard out of the law, that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up?* But to this objection Our Lord did not make them any absolute reply. He only told them, that they should soon be deprived of his presence and miracles, and that, therefore, they would do well to listen attentively to his precepts, firmly believe the doctrines he delivered, and wisely improve them to their eternal advantage; otherwise they would be rendered incapable of inheriting the promises of the Gospel. That while they had the opportunity of enjoying the benefit of his preaching and miracles, which sufficiently proved the truth of his mission from the Most High, they should make the best use of it by believing on him; as, by those means alone, they could become the children of God. *Yet a little while is the light with you: walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for, he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.* John xii. 35, &c.

After having said this Our Lord departed from the temple, in order to refresh himself from the fatigues he had undergone in so long preaching to the people. He clearly perceived that neither Divine discourses, nor miraculous cures, would gain the faith, or general approbation of any, except the populace; for, though some of their rulers might believe in him, yet such was their timidity that they durst not declare it openly, in the first place, for fear of being *excommunicated*, and, in the second place, because they loved the praise of men, more than the praise of God.

Towards the evening Our Blessed Lord went again into the temple, and exhorted the people to believe in him, as a messenger sent from God to offer salvation to mankind. *He that believeth on me believeth on him that sent me. He that*

acknowledges the divinity of any mission acknowledges the power and grace of God, on whose special errand I am thus sent. He that sees the miracles I perform, seeth the operations of that Omnipotent power by which I act. I am the Sun of righteousness, whose beams dispel the darkness of ignorance in which the sons of men are involved, and am come to deliver all who believe on me out of that gloomy darkness. You must not, however, expect, that I will at present execute my judgment upon those who refuse to embrace the doctrines of the Gospel; for I am not come to condemn and punish, but to save the world, and consequently to try every gentle and winning method to reclaim the wicked from the error of their ways, and turn their feet into the paths of life and salvation. They shall not, however, escape unpunished, who neglect the instructions and offers of salvation now made to them; for the doctrine I have preached shall bear witness against them at the awful tribunal of the last day; and as their negligence has aggravated their sin, so it shall then heighten their punishment.

Our Blessed Lord having discoursed to the people in words to this effect, left the temple, and, taking his apostles with him, retired to Bethany, where his benevolent miracle, in raising Lazarus from the dead, had procured him many friends, among whom he was always in safety. Here he continued all night, and early the next morning returned to Jerusalem. As he pursued his journey, he saw, at a distance, a fig-tree, which, from its fulness of leaves, promised abundance of fruit. As he was in want of some refreshment, he approached the tree in expectation of finding some fruit on it; but, upon his coming up to it, he discovered it to be quite barren, upon which, looking at the tree, he said, in the hearing of all the apostles, *Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever.* Matth. xxi. 19.

After being thus disappointed in finding fruit on the fig-tree, Our Blessed Lord pursued his journey to Jerusalem, whither he had no sooner arrived than he proceeded to the temple, and there continued the whole day, teaching and instructing the people. While he was doing this, the chief priests, Scribes and rulers of the people, knowing that he had no commission from the Sanhedrim, went and demanded of him by what authority he proceeded in that manner? Whether he was a prophet, priest, or king, as no other person had a right to make any alterations either in church or state? And, if he did lay claim to either of those characters, from whom he received it?

Instead of giving a direct answer to these impertinent questions of the chief priests and Pharisees, Our Lord asked them another; promising, if they resolved his question, he would also answer theirs. *I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?* Matth. xxi. 24, &c. This question greatly puzzled the priests. They considered, on the one hand, that if they acknowledged that it was from God, it would oblige them to admit the authority of Je-

sus,

fus, John having, more than once, publicly declared him to be the Messiah; and on the other, if they peremptorily denied the authority of John, they would be in danger of being stoned by the people, who, in general, considered him as a prophet. They, therefore, thought it the best way to answer, that they could not tell from whence John's baptism was. Well, therefore, might the Blessed Jesus say, *Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.* You have no right to ask, since you have confessed you are unable to judge; and, therefore, I shall not satisfy your impertinent enquiries.

As these haughty rulers had acknowledged that they knew not from whence the Baptism of John was, Our Blessed Lord sharply rebuked them both for their ignorance and obstinacy. He conveyed his reproof in the parable of the two sons commanded to work in their father's vineyard, and asking their opinion of the two, obliged them, by their answer, to condemn themselves. *A certain man (said he) had two sons, and he came to the first and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard.* But this ungracious youth very roughly answered, *I will not.* However, after reflecting on the impropriety and indecency of such behaviour to his kind and indulgent father, he repented of what he had done, and went to work in the vineyard. The father, having met with so sharp a reply from the former son, had recourse to the other, and, in the same manner, ordered him to go and work that day in the vineyard. This son was very different from the former, and, in a very dutiful manner, said *I go, Sir.* But notwithstanding this seeming obedience, he delayed to do as his father had desired; he did not go to work in the vineyard.

The temper and behaviour of the second son were exactly conformable to those of the Pharisees. They gave God the most honourable titles, and professed the utmost zeal for his service, in their prayers and praises; but at the same time they refused to do any part of the work that he enjoined them. The character of the other son is very clearly described in the disposition of the publicans and harlots. They neither professed, nor promised to do the will of their Creator; but when they came to reflect seriously on their conduct, and the offers of mercy which were so kindly made them, they submitted to Our Saviour, and, in consequence of their faith, amended their lives.

After Our Lord had finished his parable, he asked the Pharisees, which of the two sons did the will of his father? To which, without the least hesitation, they replied, *the first.* They did not immediately perceive, that by this answer they condemned themselves, till Our Lord made a just application of the parable in this sharp, but pertinent rebuke. *Verily, I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not, nor entered into your Father's vineyard, though, like the second son, ye promised so to do in the most fair and open manner; but the publicans and harlots believed him, repented of their former disobedience, and entered into the vineyard.*

Our Blessed Lord having thus rebuked the haughty Scribes and Pharisees for rejecting the

preaching of John the Baptist, he next represented to them the great crime of the people in rejecting all the prophets which had been sent since they became a nation, and, among the rest, the only begotten Son of the Most High; warning them, at the same time, of their danger, and the punishment that would inevitably ensue, if they continued in their rebellion. He told them, the outward œconomy of religion in which they gloried would be taken from them, their relation to God, as his people, cancelled, and the national constitution destroyed; all which he pointed out by the similitude of the following parable.

There was (said he) a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. The comparison of the church to a vineyard is frequently used in the Sacred Scriptures, but this particular parable, for the fuller conviction of the Jews, is expressly taken from the fifth chapter of Isaiah, with which they could not fail of being well acquainted, nor ignorant of its meaning, as the prophet, at the end of it, adds, "The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression: for righteousness, but behold a cry." Our Saviour, therefore, continued the metaphor, telling them, "that when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise." The Almighty sent the prophets to exhort the Jews to entertain just sentiments of religion, and tread in the paths of virtue; but the Jews, irritated at the prophets for the freedom they used in reproving their sins, persecuted and slew them with unrelenting fury. But their wickedness in destroying these messengers did not provoke the Almighty instantly to pour down his vengeance upon them: he sent more prophets to exhort and reclaim them, but they met with no better fate than the former. His mercy, however, still continued, and that no means might be left untried, he sent to them his own Son, whose authority being clearly manifest by undeniable miracles, ought to have been acknowledged cheerfully by these wicked men; but, instead thereof, it had a quite contrary effect. This our Lord fully explained by the conclusive part of this parable, in which the householder, after the husbandmen had killed his servants, sent his son, whom he imagined they would have received. "When the husbandmen (said he) saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir, come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord, therefore, of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons." To confirm the truth of this Our Lord added a remarkable prophecy of himself,

self, and his rejection, from the 118th Psalm. *Did you never (said he) read in the Scriptures, the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.* The rejection of the Messiah by the Jews, and his being received by the Gentiles, are wonderful events; and therefore, I say unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

The chief priests and Pharisees, finding these parables were manifestly directed to them, were greatly irritated, and would have apprehended the Divine Speaker, had they not been fearful that it would have been resented by the multitude. Being, therefore, quiet, Our Lord delivered to them another parable, wherein he described, on the one hand, the bad success which the preaching of the Gospel was to meet with among the Jews; and, on the other, the cheerful reception given it among the Gentiles. This Our Lord illustrated by the behaviour of a certain king, who, in honour of his son, made a great feast, to which he invited many guests. *The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son.* This marriage dinner, or great feast, signifies the joys of heaven, which are compared to an elegant entertainment, on account of their exquisiteness; and are here said to be prepared in honour of the Son of God, because they are bestowed on men in consequence of his suffering in their stead, and behalf.

Some time before the dinner was ready, the servants were sent forth to call the guests to the wedding, but *they would not come*: when the fullness of time approached, the Jews, as being the peculiar people of God, were first called by John the Baptist, and afterwards by Christ himself; but they refused all these benevolent calls of mercy, and rejected the kind invitations of the Gospel, though pressed by the preaching of the Messiah, and his forerunner. After our Saviour's resurrection and ascension, the apostles were sent forth to inform the Jews, that the Gospel-covenant was established, mansions in heaven prepared, and nothing wanting, but the cheerful acceptance of the honour designed them. *Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.* But these messengers were as unsuccessful as the former. The Jews undervaluing the favour mocked at the message; and some of them, more rude than the rest, insulted, beat, and slew the servants that had been sent to call them to the marriage. *But when the king heard thereof, he was wrath; and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed the murderers, and burnt up their city.* This part of the parable plainly predicted the destruction of the Jews by the Roman armies, which afterwards took place, not only the greater part of them being put to death, but likewise their temple and city totally destroyed. *Then said the king unto his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden (that is, the Jews) were not worthy. Go ye, therefore, into the highways, and as many as ye shall find (that is, of the Gentiles) bid to*

the marriage. This was immediately done, and the wedding was furnished with guests; but when the king came into the apartment, *he saw there a man, which had not on a wedding garment; and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.* Then said the king to the servants, *Bind him band and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.* Matth. xxii. 11, &c.

We may learn, from the conclusion of this parable, that the profession of the Christian religion will not save a man, unless he acts from Christian principles. Let those, therefore, who have obeyed the call, and are by profession the people of God, think often on that awful day, when the king will come in to see his guests, when every soul will be strictly examined that lays claim to the joys of heaven. Let us think of the speechless confusion that will seize such as have not on the wedding garment, and of the inexorable anxiety with which they will be consigned to weeping and gnashing of teeth. Let us remember that, to have seen, for a time, the light of the Gospel, and the fair beams of an eternal hope, without having paid a proper attention to the gracious offers made us thereby, will add deeper and more sensible horrors to our punishment; while, on the contrary, if we continue steadfast in the faith, and persevere in those Christian precepts which are laid before us, we may anticipate the joyful hour which will consign us to bliss immortal.

The last parable delivered by Our Lord at this time being apparently levelled at the Pharisees, they were so irritated, that they immediately left the temple, and consulted with the Herodians, or Sadducees, on the most proper method of putting Jesus to death. It is sufficiently evident that their hatred was now carried to the highest pitch, because the most violent enmity, which had so long subsisted between the two sects was, on this occasion, suspended, and they joined together to execute this cruel determination on the Son of God. They, however, thought it most eligible to act very cautiously, and endeavour, if possible, to catch some hasty expression from him, that they might render him odious to the people, and procure something against him, that might serve as a basis for a persecution. Accordingly they sent to him some of their own people whom they thought best able to hold a controversy, with orders to feign themselves just men, who maintained the greatest veneration for the Divine law, and dreaded nothing more than the doing any thing inconsistent with its precepts; and, under this specious cloak of hypocrisy, to beg his determination of an affair that had long lain heavy on their consciences, namely, the paying tribute to Cæsar, which they thought inconsistent with the zeal of their religion.

The question was, it seems, furiously debated in our Saviour's time; one Judas, a native of Galilee, having inspired the people with a notion that taxes to a foreign power were absolutely unlawful. A doctrine so pleasing to the worldly-minded Jews could not fail of friends, especially among the lower class, and therefore must have many partizans among the multitude that

that then surrounded the Son of God. The priests therefore imagined, that it was not in his power to decide the point, without rendering himself obnoxious to some of the parties: if he should say it was lawful to pay the taxes, they believed that the people, in whose hearing the question was proposed, would be incensed against him, not only as a base pretender, who, on being attacked, publicly renounced the character of the Messiah, which he had assumed among his friends, but also as a flatterer of princes; and a betrayer of the liberties of his country; one who taught a doctrine inconsistent with the known privileges of the people of God: but if he should affirm that it was unlawful to pay tribute, they determined to inform the governor, who, they hoped, would punish him as a fomenter of sedition.

Having laid this diabolical plan, the enemies of Our Lord immediately repaired to the temple, where he was then preaching to the people; not doubting but the scheme they had formed would be amply carried into execution. Accordingly, after passing an encomium on the truth of his mission, his courage and impartiality, they asked him this question: *What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar?* But the Blessed Jesus saw through their secret intentions; and accordingly called them hypocrites, to signify, that though they made conscience, and a regard for the Divine will, their pretence for proposing this question, he saw through the thin veil that concealed their design from the eyes of mortals, and knew that their intention was, to ensnare him. He, however, did not decline answering their question, but previously desired to see a piece of the tribute money. The piece was accordingly produced, and proved to be coined by the Romans; upon which Our Lord gave them this answer: *Render, therefore, unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God, the things that are God's.* As if he had said, "At the same time that you discharge your duty to the civil magistrate, you should never forget the duty you owe to your God; but remember, that as you bear the image of the great, the Omnipotent King, you are his subjects, and ought to pay him the tribute of yourselves, serving him to the utmost of your power."

An answer so unexpected quite disconcerted and silenced these crafty enemies of Christ. They were astonished, both at his having discovered their design, and his wisdom in avoiding the snare they had so artfully laid for him. *When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.* Matth. xxii. 22.

After Our Lord had thus defeated the two conjunctive parties, the Sadducees attacked him separately, by starting a question which they thought insurmountable. They denied the doctrine of a future state, together with the existence of angels and spirits; and therefore proposed to him their strongest argument against the resurrection, which they deduced from the law given by Moses, with regard to marriage. "Master," (said they) "Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. There were, therefore, seven brethren; and the first

"took a wife, and died without children. And the second took her to wife, and died childless. And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also. And they died and left no children. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife." Luke xx. 28, &c.

The Sadducees, who believed the soul to be nothing more than a refined matter, were persuaded, that, if there was any future state, it must resemble the present; and that being in that state material and mortal, the human race could not be continued, nor the individuals rendered happy, without the pleasures and conveniences of marriage. And hence they considered it as a necessary consequence of the doctrine of the resurrection, or a future state, that every man's wife should be restored to him.

But this argument Our Blessed Lord soon confuted, by telling the Pharisees they were ignorant of the power of God, who had created spirit as well as matter, and who could render man completely happy in the enjoyment of himself. He also observed, that the nature of the life obtained in a future state made marriage altogether superfluous, because in the world to come men, being spiritual and immortal, like the angels, there was no need of natural means to propagate or continue the kind. *Ye do err (said the Blessed Jesus) not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage.* Matth. xxii. 29, 30. *Neither can they die any more; for, they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.* Luke xx. 36. Hence we may observe, that good men are called the children of the Most High, from their inheritance at the resurrection, and particularly on account of their being adorned with immortality.

After Our Lord had thus pointed out to the Sadducees their great folly and unbelief, he proceeded to shew them that they were also ignorant of the scriptures, and particularly of the writings of Moses, from whence they had drawn their objection, by demonstrating, from the very law itself, the certainty of a resurrection, at least that of just men; and consequently quite demolished the opinion of the Sadducees, who, by believing the materiality of the soul, affirmed that men were annihilated at their deaths, and that their opinion was founded on the writings of Moses. *Now (said Our Lord) that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.* Luke xx. 37, 38. As if he had said, The Almighty cannot properly be called God, unless he has his people, and be Lord of the living. Since, therefore, Moses called him the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, long after those venerable patriarchs were dead, the relation denoted by the word God still subsisted between them; consequently they were not annihilated as you pretend, but are still in being, and continue to be the servants of the Most High.

This argument effectually silenced the Sadducees.

cees, and the multitude were agreeably surprized to see the objection, hitherto thought impregnable, totally abolished, and the sect they had long abominated fully confuted. *And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine.* Matth. xxii. 33.

No sooner had Our Blessed Lord confuted the absurd arguments of the Sadducees, than he was attacked by one of the Scribes, who desired him to give his opinion on a question which had been often debated among them, namely, which was the great commandment of the law? It is to be observed that some of the most learned among them had declared that the law of sacrifices was the great commandment; some that it was the law of circumcision; and others, that it was the law of meats and washings.

But Our Blessed Lord, in the answer he gave to the question, clearly pointed out to them that they were all mistaken; for that the great commandment of the law was the duty of piety, as one proof of which he particularly mentioned that comprehensive summary of it given by Moses. *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment.* Mark xii. 29, 30.

The first and chief commandment is, to give God our hearts. The Divine Being is so transcendently amiable in himself, and hath, by the innumerable benefits conferred upon us, such a title to our utmost affection, that no obligation bears any proportion to that of loving him. The honour assigned to this precept proves, that piety is the noblest act of the human mind; and that the chief ingredient in piety is love, founded on a clear and extensive view of the Divine perfections, a permanent sense of his benefits, and a deep conviction of his being the sovereign good, our portion, and our happiness. But it is essential to love, that there be a delight in contemplating the beauty of the object beloved, whether that beauty be matter of sensation or reflection; that we frequently, and with pleasure, reflect on the benefits conferred on us by the object of our affections; that we have a strong desire of pleasing him, great fear of doing any thing to offend him, and a sensible joy in thinking we are beloved in return. Hence the duties of devotion, prayer and praise, are the most natural and genuine exercises of the love of God. Nor is this virtue so much any single affection, as the continual bent of all the affections and powers of the soul: consequently to love God is, as much as possible, to direct the whole soul towards him, and to exercise all its faculties on him as its chief object. Accordingly, the love of God is described in scripture by the several operations of the mind, *a following ka d after God*; that is, by intense contemplation, a sense of his perfections, gratitude for his benefits, trust in his goodness, attachment to his service, resignation to his Providence, the obeying his commandments, admiration, hope, fear, joy, &c. not because it consists in any of these singly, but in them altogether; for to content ourselves with partial regard to the Supreme Being is not to be affected towards him in the manner we ought to be, and

which his perfections claim. Hence the words of the precept: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.*

Our Blessed Lord having thus answered the question put to him by the Scribe, and clearly pointed out the first great commandment of the law, added, *And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* This, indeed, had no relation to the lawyer's question concerning the first commandment; but Our Blessed Lord thought proper to shew him which was the second, probably because the men of his sect did not acknowledge the importance of love to their neighbours, or because they were remarkably deficient in the practice of it.

The love of our neighbour was very justly represented by Our Lord as the second grand commandment of the law. It is one of the principles of our love to God, and must be productive of every good work. All the best things we can do, if destitute of this principle, will appear to be either the effect of hypocrisy, or done to procure the esteem of men. Without love, a narrowness of soul will shut us up within ourselves, and make all we do to others only as a sort of merchandize, trading for our own advantage. Those who really love their neighbour have a constant calm within, and are not disturbed with passion, jealousy, envy or ill-nature. They observe and rejoice in the happiness of others; they are glad to see them easy, and share with them in their joy and felicity; not fretting or complaining though they enjoy less than their neighbours. The good man, by the overflowings of his love, is sure that he is a favourite with his Maker, because he loves his neighbour. His soul dwells at ease, and there is sweetness in all his thoughts and wishes. This makes him clear and easy in his views of every kind, and renders him grateful to all around him.

When the Scribe heard the answer Our Blessed Lord gave to the question put to him, he was astonished at the justness of his decision, and answered, That he had determined rightly, since there is but one supreme God, whom we must all adore: and if we love him above all temporal things, and our neighbour as ourselves, we worship him more acceptably than if we sacrifice to him *all the cattle upon a thousand hills.* Our Lord highly applauded the piety and wisdom of this reflection, by declaring that the person who made it was *not far from the kingdom of God.*

As the Scribes and Pharisees had, during the course of Our Saviour's ministry, proposed to him many difficult questions, in order to prove his prophetic gifts, he now, in his turn, thought proper to make a trial of their knowledge in the sacred writings. For this purpose he asked their opinion of a difficulty concerning the Messiah's pedigree. *What think ye (said he) of Christ? Whose son is he?* They say unto him, *The son of David.* Our Lord then asked them in what sense the Messiah could be David's son, when David himself called him *Lord.* *If David, then, call him Lord, how is he his son?* The Jewish doctors did not imagine that their Messiah would be endued with any perfections greater than those that might be enjoyed by human nature: for though

though they called him the Son of God, they had no notion that he was divinity itself, and therefore really the Lord of David. In consequence of these their imperfect ideas they were not able to give an answer to the question propounded. *And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.*

After these disputes with the Scribes and Pharisees (which were the last he had with them) Our Lord left the temple, and, in the evening, retired again with his apostles to Bethany.

As Our Blessed Lord was returning the next morning to Jerusalem, his apostles, observing that the fig-tree, on which he had the day before denounced a judgment on account of its barrenness, was withered away, and dead to the very root, took notice of it to him as a thing very strange and surprizing. In consequence of this observation Our Lord exhorted them to have a steadfast faith in God, and to preserve a fervency and perseverance in their prayers, in doing of which they would not fail, in the course of their ministry, to perform as great, or greater miracles, than what he had done in causing the unfruitful fig-tree to wither and die away.

As soon as Our Blessed Lord returned to Jerusalem, he immediately repaired to the temple, and began to teach the people as he had done the day before; and, to raise an aversion in his disciples, and in all that heard him, to the principles and practices of the Scribes and Pharisees, he took the freedom to expose their vices without reserve; their pride, their hypocrisy, their covetousness, their hard-heartedness to parents, their impiety to God, and their cruelty to his faithful servants. *The Scribes and the Pharisees (said he) sit in Moses' seat. All, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.* While they teach the doctrines before delivered by Moses, observe all they say; but by no means imitate their practices; for they impose many precepts on their disciples, which they never perform themselves. *For they bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on mens shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.* But all their works they do for to be seen of men. The difficult precepts they impose on others are never regarded by these hypocrites, and any good action they may happen to perform is vitiated by the principle from whence it proceeds. They do it only with a view to gain popular applause, and not from a regard to God, far less from a love of goodness. They are proud and arrogant to excess, as is plain from their affected gravity in their cloaths; from the anxiety they discover lest they should not obtain the principal seats in the public assemblies, and from their affecting to be saluted in the streets with the sounding titles of Rabbi, and father. *They make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments. And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.* Matt. xxiii. 5, 6, 7.

The word *Rabbi* signifies, properly, great, and was given to those men who had rendered them-

selves remarkable for the extent of their learning; it is therefore no wonder that the proud and supercilious Pharisees were fond of a title, which so highly complimented their understandings, and gave them great authority with their disciples. But the followers of the Blessed Jesus were to decline this title, because the thing signified by it belonged wholly to their master, in whom are placed all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and because they did not owe any part of their knowledge to themselves, but derived it entirely from him. *But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your father, which is in heaven.* Life, with all its blessings, come from God, and men wholly depend upon him; all praise and thankfulness, therefore, should ultimately be referred to him; so that if any one teacheth rightly, not the teacher, but the wisdom of God, is to be praised.

Nor were the disciples of Our Blessed Saviour to accept of the title of *master*, or *leader*, which the Jewish doctors also courted, because, in point of commission and inspiration, they were all equal, neither had they any title to rule the consciences of men, except by virtue of the inspiration which they had received from their Master, to whom alone the prerogative of infallibility belonged. *Neither be ye called masters; for one is your master, even Christ.* The Divine teacher, however, did not intend by this to insinuate that it was sinful to call men by the stations they held in the world: he only meant to reprove the weakness of the common people, who loaded their teachers with praises, and forgot to ascribe any thing to God; and to root out of the minds of his apostles the Pharisaical vanity, which decked itself with honour belonging solely to the Creator of the universe. Accordingly, that he might instil into their hearts a proper principle to dispose them to do good offices one to another as occasion offered, he assured them that humility was the only road to true greatness: for by assuming what did not properly belong to them, they would be despised both by God and men; whereas, if they did not disdain to perform the meanest offices of love to their brethren, they would enjoy a very high degree of the Divine favour.

Among the great multitude that at this time heard Our Lord's discourses were many of the Scribes and Pharisees, who were greatly offended at his doctrine, and particularly as the subject matter was principally levelled at them. This, however, did not lay any restraint on the Divine teacher. He had hitherto used the most mild persuasions to bring them to a sense of their wickedness without effect; and as this was to be the last sermon he was ever to preach in public, he thought it necessary that he should now treat them with some severity. He therefore denounced, in the most solemn manner, dreadful woes against them, on account of their excessive wickedness. They were public teachers of religion, and therefore should have used every method in their power to recommend its precepts to the people, and to have been themselves shining examples of every duty it enjoined; but

on the contrary, they abused every mark and character of goodness, and, under the cloak of a severe and sanctified aspect, were malicious, implacable, covetous and rapacious. In a word, instead of being reformers, they were the corrupters of mankind, and consequently their wickedness deserved that rebuke which was justly given them by the great Redeemer of mankind. "Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer them that were entering to go in. Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye devour widows houses, and, for a pretence, make long prayer; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye compass sea and land, to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him two-fold more the child of hell than yourselves." The punishments you shall suffer will be terribly severe, because you have given a wrong interpretation of the antient prophecies concerning the Messiah, and done all that is in your power to hinder the people from repenting of their sins, and believing the Gospel: because you have committed the grossest iniquities, and, under the cloak of religion, have devoured the substance of widows and orphans, hoping to hide your villainies by long prayers: because ye have expressed the greatest zeal imaginable in making proselytes, not with a view to render the Gentiles more wise and virtuous, but to acquire their riches, and a command over their consciences; and instead of teaching them the precepts of virtue and the moral duties of religion, you confine their duties to superstitious and ceremonial institutions; and hence they often relapse into their old state of Heathenism, and become more wicked than before they were converted, and consequently liable to a more severe sentence.

Having said this, Our Lord next proceeded to their doctrine concerning oaths. He declared, in opposition to their abominable tenets, that every oath, if the matter of it be lawful, is obligatory: because when men swear by any part of the creation, it is an appeal to the Creator himself; for in any other light an oath of this kind is absolutely ridiculous, the object having neither knowledge of the fact, nor power to punish the perjury. "Wo unto you ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing: but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor. Ye fools, and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? and whosoever shall swear by the altar it is nothing, but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon."

After this, Our Lord reprehended their super-

stitious practices, in observing the minutest parts of the ceremonial precepts of the law, and at the same time utterly neglecting the eternal and indispensable rules of righteousness. "Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye pay tythe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." Our Lord then censured them for their hypocrisy. They spared no pains to appear virtuous in the eyes of the world, and maintain all external conduct that should acquire the praises of men, but at the same time neglected to adorn their souls with the robe of righteousness, which was the only ornament that could render them conspicuous in the sight of their Master. "Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and the platter, that the outside of them may be clean also." Cleanse first the mind, thy inward man, from evil dispositions and affections; and the outward behaviour will, of course, be virtuous and praise-worthy.

Having thus pointed out their hypocrisy, Our Lord next animadverted on the success that had attended it. They deceived the simple and unthinking part of mankind with their pretended sanctity, appearing like whited sepulchres, beautiful on the outside, while their internal parts were full of uncleanness. "Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead mens bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." He also reproved the pains they had taken in adorning the sepulchres of the prophets; because they pretended a great veneration for their memory, and even condemned their fore-fathers, who killed them, saying, if they had lived in the days of their fathers, they would have opposed such monstrous wickedness, while, at the same time, all their actions abundantly proved that they still cherished the same spirit they condemned in their fathers, by themselves persecuting the messengers of the Most High, particularly his own begotten Son, whom they were determined to destroy. "Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witness unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets." He added; that for their great iniquities they must expect the Divine vengeance, and that it would be inflicted in so terrible a degree, as to be a standing monument of God's displeasure against all the murders committed by the sons of men, from the death of Abel, to that of Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada the high-priest.

After

After Our Blessed Lord had thus laid before them their heinous guilt, and the dreadful punishment that would follow, he was, at the thoughts of the calamities which were soon to fall upon them, exceedingly moved, and his breast filled with sensations of pity to such a degree, that unable to contain himself, he broke out into the same bemoaning exclamation he had made use of before. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." By the word *house* Our Blessed Lord meant the temple, which was from that time to be left unto them desolate; the glory of the Lord, which Haggai had prophesied should fill the second house, was now departing from it. Our Lord, therefore, added, *I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.* As if he had said, "As ye have killed the prophets, and will shortly put me, who am the Lord of the temple to death, your holy house shall be left desolate, and your nation totally deserted by me; nor shall you see me any more till ye shall acknowledge the dignity of my character, and the importance of my mission, and say, with all the people of the earth, *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.*"

Our Blessed Lord, having thus exposed the secret practices of the Scribes and Pharisees, and denounced the judgment that would fall upon them for their iniquities, went into the court of the temple called the treasury, from several chests being fixed to the pillars of the portico that surrounded it, for receiving the offerings of those who went to worship in the temple. While he continued in this court, "he beheld how people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which made a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily, I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury. For all they did cast in of their abundance: but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living." Mark xii. 41, &c.

Notwithstanding the offering given by this poor widow was in itself very small, yet, in proportion to the goods of fortune she enjoyed, it was remarkably large; for it was all she had, even all her living. In order, therefore, to encourage charity, and shew that it is the disposition of the mind, not the magnificence of the offering, that attracted the regard of the Almighty, the Son of God applauded this poor widow, as having given more in proportion, than any of the rich. Their offerings, though great in respect of hers, were but a small part of their estates, whereas her offering was her whole stock. And from this passage of the Gospel we should learn, that the poor, who in appearance are denied the means of doing charitable offices, are encouraged to do all they can. For how small soever the gift may be, the Almighty, who beholds the heart, values it, not according to what it is in itself, but ac-

cording to the disposition with which it is given. On the other hand, we should learn from hence, that it is not enough for the rich, that they exceed the poor in gifts of charity; they should bestow in proportion to their fortune; and they would do well to remember, that a little given, where a little only is left, appears a much nobler offering in the sight of God; and discovers a more benevolent and humane temper of mind, than sums much larger bestowed out of a plentiful abundance.

As Our Lord was about leaving the temple, it came strongly into the minds of his apostles, what he had declared at the conclusion of his pathetic lamentation over Jerusalem, namely, that the temple should not any more be favoured with his presence till they should say, *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.* This reflection gave them great uneasiness; and therefore, as he was departing from that sacred structure, they desired him to observe the beauty of the building, insinuating that they thought it strange he should intimate an intention of leaving it desolate. *Master* (said one of them) *see what manner of stones, and what buildings are here.* In answer to this Our Lord told them, that however strong or costly it appeared, yet the whole should be totally destroyed. *Seest thou* (said he) *these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.* That noble edifice, raised with much labour, and at a very great expence, shall be levelled to the very surface of the earth.

When the disciples heard their Master affirm that not one of those enormous stones should be left upon another, they thought, indeed, that the temple was to be demolished, but did not suspect that the sacrifices were to be taken away, and a new religion introduced, which would render the temple unnecessary. They therefore flattered themselves that the fabric then standing was too small for the numerous worshippers who would frequent it when all the nations of the world were subject to the Messiah's kingdom, and that therefore it was to be pulled down, in order that another might be erected on a more extensive and magnificent plan, suitable to the idea they had conceived of his future empire. Filled with these pleasing imaginations, they received the intelligence with pleasure, meditating, as they walked along, on the glorious things which (as they thought) were shortly to come to pass.

Our Blessed Lord directed his course to the Mount of Olives, whither he frequently retired to discourse in private with his apostles. When they arrived at the top of the mount, and their Master had taken his seat on an eminence, from whence there was a prospect of the temple, and part of the city, they drew near him with a resolution of satisfying themselves relative to the ideas they had formed concerning the temple; when the demolition of the old structure was to happen, and what were to be the signs of his coming, and of the end of the world. *And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?* It appears, from this request, that they were desirous of

knowing what signs should precede the creation of that extensive empire, over which they supposed the Messiah was to reign; for they still expected he would govern a secular kingdom. They, therefore, connected the demolition of the temple with their Master's coming, though they had not the least notion that he was to destroy the nation, and change the form of religious worship. What they meant, therefore, by the *end of the world* was nothing more than the period of the then political government; and considered their Master's coming to destroy the constitution then subsisting as a very desirable event. They also thought the demolition of the temple proper, as they expected a larger and more superb building (proportioned to the number of the Messiah's subjects) would be erected in its stead. That this was the real sense of their question will sufficiently appear if we consider that they were highly pleased with their imaginary and worldly prospect; whereas, if they had meant by the *end of the world*, the final period of all things, the destruction of the temple would have exhibited to them, in their then temper of mind, a melancholy prospect, which they could not have beheld, without shewing a deep concern on the occasion.

But Our Blessed Lord soon convinced them of their mistake, by telling them that he was not come to rule a secular empire, as they supposed, but to punish the Jews for their perfidy and rebellion; after which he proceeded to inform them of the signs that would precede the destruction both of their temple and nation, in doing of which he began with giving them the following caution relative to their future conduct. "Take heed (said he) that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." This caution was, no doubt, exceeding necessary, because, though the apostles were to see their Master ascend into heaven, yet they might take occasion, from the prophecy, to think that he would appear again on earth; and therefore they might be in danger of seduction by the false prophets that should arise.

And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, see that ye be not troubled, for all these things must come to pass; but the end is not yet. Before this nation and temple are destroyed, terrible wars will happen in the land: *For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.* These are the preludes of the important event, forerunners of the evils which shall befall this people and nation. At the same time you shall meet with hot persecutions: walk, therefore, circumspectly, and arm yourselves both with patience and fortitude, that ye may be able to perform your duty through the whole course of these persecutions; for you shall

be brought before the great men of the earth for my sake. "But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought before-hand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost." Mark xiii. 11.

Our Blessed Lord then told them that, during this time of trouble and confusion, the perfidy of mankind should be so great towards one another, that, *brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son: and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.* The unbelieving Jews, and apostate Christians shall commit the most enormous crimes. It is, therefore, no wonder that the perfidy and wickedness of such pretended Christians should discourage many disciples, and greatly hinder the propagation of the gospel. But he who supports his faith during these persecutions, and is not led away by the seduction of false Christians, shall escape that terrible judgment which will fall upon them for their baseness and perfidy.

And when Jerusalem shall be surrounded with armies, Pagan armies, bearing in their standards the images of their idols, the *abomination of desolation*, mentioned by the prophet Daniel; then let him who has read the predictions of that prophet understand, that the end of the city and sanctuary, together with the ceasing of the sacrifice and oblation there predicted, is near at hand, and consequently the final period of the Jewish nation. "Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out," Luke xxi. 21. "Let him which is on the house-top not come down to take any thing out of his house. Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his cloathes, Matth. xxiv. 17, 18." Then shall be fulfilled the awful predictions of the prophet Daniel, and the dreadful judgments denounced against the impenitent and unbelieving. In those days of vengeance the women who are with child, and those who give suck, shall be particularly unhappy, because they cannot flee from the impending destruction. *But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, when the badness of the roads, and the rigour of the season, will render speedy travelling troublesome, if not impossible; neither on the sabbath-day, when you shall think it unlawful.* For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be*. He farther said, that except the days of tribulation should be shortened, none of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judea, of whom he was then speaking, should escape destruction†. But, added he, for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened

* That this part of the prophecy was most amply fulfilled appears from the relation given us by Josephus, who says that when the Roman army invested Jerusalem, no less than 1,100,000 persons perished in the siege.

† We are told, by the same historian, that the quarrels which raged during the siege were so fierce and obstinate,

that both within the walls of Jerusalem, and without in the neighbouring country, the whole land was one continued scene of horror and desolation: and that had the siege continued much longer, the whole nation of the Jews must have been totally extirpated.

shortened the days. By the elect are signified, such of the Jews as had embraced the doctrines of the Gospel, and particularly those who were brought in with the fulness of the Gentiles.

As it is natural, in times of trouble, to look with eager expectation for a deliverer, Our Blessed Lord cautioned his disciples not to listen to any pretences of that kind, as many false prophets would arise, and deceive great numbers of the people †. “If any man shall say to you, ‘Lo, here is Christ; or lo, he is there; believe him not: For false christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things. Mark xiii. 21, &c.”

But as the partizans of the false prophets might pretend that the Messiah was, for a time, concealed for fear of the Romans, and the weaker sort of Christians might imagine that Christ was actually returned to deliver the nation in its extremity, and to punish their enemies who so cruelly oppressed them, Our Lord thought proper to caution them against this particular. “Wherefore (said he) if they shall say unto you ‘Behold, he is in the desert, go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers, believe it not. For as the lightening cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Matth. xxiv. 26, &c.” The coming of the Son of man shall be like lightning, swift and destructive. But he will not come personally; his servants only shall come, the Roman armies, who, by his command, shall destroy the Jewish nation.

Our Blessed Lord, having thus given them a particular account of the various circumstances which should precede the destruction of Jerusalem, next described that catastrophe itself, in all the beauties of language and imagery made use of by the antient prophets, when they foretold the destruction of cities and kingdoms. “But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light: and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken.” Mark xiii. 24. “And upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring: men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.” Luke xxi. 25. By these lofty and figurative expressions, the decaying of all the glory, excellency and prosperity of the nation, and the introduction of universal sadness, misery and confusion, are beautifully described. The roaring of the sea and the waves may justly be considered as metaphorical, as the signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars are plainly so; and by the powers are meant the whole Jewish policy, government, laws and religion, which were the

works of heaven: these Our Lord tells us should be shaken, or rather totally dissolved.

Having thus beautifully; but awfully described this important and striking event, the Blessed Jesus assured his disciples that it would be very unexpected, and thence urged the necessity of a watchful vigilance, lest they should be surprized, and have a share in these calamities. From hence he took occasion to put them in mind of the destruction of the world, and to exhort them to a faithful discharge of their duty, from the consideration of the suddenness of his coming, to call every individual to account after death. “Therefore (said he) be ye all ready; for in such an hour, as you think not, the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh, shall find so doing. Verily, I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.” Matth. xxiv. 44, &c. As if he had said, “You, who are ministers of religion, ought to be particularly attentive in discharging, the important trust committed to your care; you are the stewards in whom are entrusted the whole household of the church; and you would do well to remember, that your example will have a great effect upon the minds of those employed under you. It is your duty to be well acquainted with the stores of the Divine truths, and to understand how they may be applied to the best advantage. You should also be careful to know the characters of the different persons under your directions, that you may be able to give each his portion of meat in due season; and if I find you thus employed, I will reward you with the joy of my kingdom, even as an earthly master bestows particular marks of respect on such servants as have been remarkably faithful in any important trust. But, on the other hand, if you are not true to the trust reposed in you; if you pervert your office, and watch not over the souls committed to your care, I will come unto you unexpectedly, and make you dreadful examples of mine anger, by the severe punishments which I will inflict upon you. But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, ‘my Lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken: the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of: and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion, with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’” Matth. xxiv. 48, &c.

After Our Blessed Lord had thus pointed out to his disciples the future state of retribution, he proceeded to the consideration of the general judgment, when those rewards and punishments should

† This part of the prediction was likewise fully accomplished during the terrible siege of Jerusalem by the Romans. Josephus tells us, that many arose pretending to be the Messiah, boasting that they would deliver the nation from all its enemies: and the multitude, always too prone to

listen to deceivers, who promise temporal advantages, giving credit to those deceivers, became more obstinate in their opposition to the Romans, and thereby rendered their destruction more severe and inevitable.

should be distributed in their utmost extent. "Then (said he) shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

To the ten virgins mentioned in this parable may be compared all those to whom the Gospel is preached. To these all Christian professors may be likened, who, taking the lamp of Christian faith, go forth to meet the bridegroom; that is, prepare themselves as candidates for the kingdom of heaven, and desire to be admitted with Christ, the celestial bridegroom, into the happy mansions of immortality. It must be remembered, that there always was, and always will be, a mixture of good and bad in the church, till the great day of separation arrives. The weakness of the foolish is represented by those virgins who took no oil in their vessels with their lamps; that is, the foolish Christians content themselves with the bare lamp of a profession, and never think of furnishing it with the oil of Divine grace, the fruit of which is a life of holiness. Whereas the wise, well knowing that a lamp, without the supply of oil, would be speedily extinguished; that faith, without love and holiness, will be of no consequence, take care to supply themselves with a sufficient quantity of the Divine grace, and to display in their lives the works of love and charity.

In order to shew us more clearly the nature and use of Christian watchfulness, to which Our Lord exhorts us at the conclusion of the before-mentioned parable, he delivered another, in which he represented the different characters of a faithful and slothful servant, and the difference of their future acceptation. This parable, like the former, is intended to stir us up to a zealous preparation for the coming of Our Lord, by diligence in the discharge of our duty, and by carefully improving ourselves in holiness; and at the same time to expose the vain pretences of hypocrites, and to demonstrate that fair speeches and outward form, without the power of godliness, will be of no service in the last day of accounts.

In delivering this parable Our Blessed Lord

told his disciples, that the Son of man, with respect to his final coming to judge the world, might be likened "unto a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several abilities: and straightway took his journey." Matth. xxv. 14, 15. Immediately on their master's departure he that had received the five talents lost no time, but went and traded with the same, and his increase was equal to his industry and application: he made them other five talents. He that had received the two talents did the same, and had equal success. But he that received one, very unlike the conduct of his fellow-servants, went his way, digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money, idle, useless, unemployed, and unimproved.

After some time, and at an hour when they did not expect it, the lord of those servants returned, called them before him, and ordered them to give an account of their several trusts. Upon this, he that had received five talents, as a proof of his fidelity, produced other five talents, saying, "Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents, behold I have gained besides them five talents more." His lord, highly approving his industry and fidelity, said to him, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Matth. xxv. 21. In like manner, he that had received two talents declared he had gained two other; upon which he was honoured with the same applause, and admitted into the same joy with his fellow-servant. After this, he that had received the one talent came, and, with a shameful falshood, to excuse his vile indolence, said, "Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: and I was afraid, and went and hid the talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine." This perversion greatly excited the resentment of his Lord, who answered, "Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knowest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: thou oughtest, therefore, to have put my money to the exchangers, and then, at my coming, I should have received mine own with usury. Take, therefore, the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away, even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matth. xxv. 26, &c.

Such is the parable of the talents, which contains the measures of our duty to God, and the motives that enforce it, all delivered in the plainest and most simple allusion. But its views are so extensive and affecting, that while it instructs the meanest capacity, it engages reverence and attention from the greatest, and strikes an impression on the most improved understanding.

We are to consider God as our Lord and Master, the author and giver of every good gift, and ourselves as his servants or stewards, who, in various instances and measures, have received from his goodness such blessings and abilities as may fit us for the several stations and offices of life to which his Providence appoints us. But then we are to observe, that these are committed to us as a trust or loan, for the due management of which we are accountable to the donor. If, therefore, we faithfully acquit ourselves of this probationary charge, we shall receive far greater instances of God's confidence and favour; but, if we are remiss and negligent, we must expect to feel his displeasure and resentment.

After delivering this parable Our Blessed Lord proceeded to describe the manner of his coming to the last and general judgment, when, surrounded with the refulgent rays of his glory, he should summons all the people that ever lived in the world to appear before him. "When the Son of man (said he) shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them, one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left." Matth. xxv. 31. Here Our Blessed Lord compares good men to sheep, on account of their innocence; and wicked men to goats, for their exorbitant lusts. He does not, however, pursue the allegory farther, but describes the remaining, and, indeed, the greatest part of this awful scene in terms perfectly simple and intelligible. Here the judgment of all nations is exhibited; and the particulars on which these awful trials are to proceed, displayed by the great Judge himself. Here we learn that we shall be condemned or acquitted, according as we have neglected or performed works which flow from the great principles of faith and piety, and which the very heathens are, by the light of nature, invited to perform. Good men can at best but consider their present state as exceeding wretched: a state in which they are often exposed to innumerable temptations, to persecutions, to poverty, reproach and contempt. But the consideration that they are travelling towards the heavenly Jerusalem, a place prepared for them when the foundations of the world were laid, will be abundantly sufficient to support their spirits, and render them *more than conquerors*. The glory laid up for them in the mansions of eternity, and which the great Judge will, at the awful day of accounts, confer upon them, will animate them to bear the violences of their oppressors, and even defy the malice of men and devils. Nay, they will behold with contempt the flourishing prosperity of the wicked, and look forward to that glorious and immortal crown, which will be given them by their great Redeemer. "Then shall the King say unto them on the right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you

"from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me." The righteous shall then ask, with great reverence and humility, when they performed these services, as they never saw him in want, and therefore could not assist him? "Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? or when saw we thee sick in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer, and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Matth. xxv. 37, &c. This is truly astonishing indeed! The united wisdom of men and angels could never have discovered a more proper method to convey an idea of the warmth and force of the Divine benevolence to the sons of men, or offer a more forcible motive to charity, than that the Son of God should, from his seat of judgment, in presence of the whole race of mankind, and all the hosts of blessed spirits from the courts of heaven, declare that all good offices done to the afflicted are done to himself. During the time of his dwelling with human nature in this vale of tears, he suffered the most unspeakable injuries: and therefore he considers all the distressed virtuous as members of his body, loves them with the utmost tenderness, and is so greatly interested in their welfare, that he rejoices when they are happy.

The awful judge himself having told his disciples what would be the happy fate of the righteous, next proceeded to inform them what would befall the wicked, on whom he passed the following sentence of condemnation: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger and ye took me not in: Naked, and ye clothed me not: Sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or a thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."

After having thus represented the sentences that were to be passed on the righteous and the wicked, Our Lord closed his discourse with the following words: *And those (speaking of the wicked) shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.* Happy decision to the followers of the Lamb! Awful sentence to the workers of iniquity! May it, therefore, excite us to pray for that grace, by which alone we shall obtain the former!

C H A P. XII.

Our Blessed Lord goes to the house of Simon the leper at Bethany, where he is anointed by a poor but pious woman. The Sanhedrim meet at Jerusalem, and form an ultimate resolution of putting him to death. Our Lord teaches his disciples humility by condescending to wash their feet. Intimates to them who should betray him into the hands of his enemies. The perfidious Judas goes to the Sanhedrim, and agrees to betray his Master for thirty pieces of silver. Our Lord exhorts his other apostles to mutual love. Sends Peter and John to Jerusalem to make the necessary preparations for celebrating the Passover. Revives the drooping spirits of his apostles, by promising them a better life, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, after his departure. Goes to Jerusalem, and after eating the Passover, institutes the Sacrament, in commemoration of his death and sufferings. Reproves his apostles for their ambitious thoughts. Predicts Peter's cowardice in denying him. Fortifies his disciples against his approaching death. Foretels Peter's cowardice again. Preaches to and prays with his disciples for the last time. Retires into the garden of Gethsemane, where he prays in private to his Father. Is in great agony on the occasion; but receives comfort from a Divine messenger. Is betrayed by Judas, and seized by a band of soldiers.

AFTER Our Blessed Lord had finished his prophetic discourse to his disciples on the Mount of Olives, he retired with them to Bethany, and there entered the house of one Simon, whom, among his other miracles, he had cured of a leprosy. While he was here a woman, who, doubtless, had been an object of his mercy, and was now desirous of testifying her acknowledgments for the past benefits received, came into the room where he was, and, out of an alabaster cruse, poured so great a quantity of rich ointment upon his head, as scented the whole house with its fragrantcy. This action greatly displeased the disciples, who knew their Master was not delighted with luxuries of any kind; and therefore they rebuked the woman, imagining that it would have been more acceptable to the Son of God, if the ointment had been sold, and the money distributed among the sons and daughters of poverty and affliction. But Our Blessed Lord reproved his disciples for their conduct. He told them that those who did not now testify their love to him would soon be deprived of the opportunity of doing it, as the time of his ministry was near its period, when the king of terrors should enjoy a short triumph over his body; and that therefore this woman had seasonably anointed him for his burial. And to make them sensible of their folly in blaming the woman for her conduct, he assured them, that she should be highly celebrated for this action, in every part of the world, and that her memory should live to the latest period of time. *Verily I say unto you, Whosoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.* Mark xiv. 9.

After this transaction Our Lord left Simon's house, and went to that of Martha's, where he continued all the next day, without going to Jerusalem, as he had done the day before.

In the mean time the Sanhedrim assembled at the palace of Caiphas the high-priest, where the Priests, Scribes, and Elders of the people, held

a solemn debate and consultation how they might take Jesus by some secret stratagem, and put him to death. This was the second council they had held on the occasion, and though therein it was determined he should die, yet they thought it not advisable to put their design into execution during the time of the approaching solemnity, lest it should cause a sedition among the people, who had the highest veneration for him. *And the chief priests and the Scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death. But they said, Not on the feast-day, lest there be an uproar of the people.*

On the second evening of Our Lord's being at Bethany, he supped, with his disciples, at Martha's house; and, while they were at table, considering within himself, that his time was now short, he resolved to give them a farther testimony of his love, and, from his own example, teach them two virtues, which, of all others, were more especially requisite in their ministry of the Gospel, namely, *humility and charity*. To this purpose, rising from the table, laying aside his upper garment, and girding himself with a towel (as the manner of servants then was when they waited on their masters) he poured water into a basin, and began to wash his apostles feet, and to wipe them with the towel. Amazed at this condescension, Peter, (when he came to him) modestly declined it: but his Master told him, that if he refused to submit implicitly to all his orders, he could have no part with him; upon which Peter cried out, *Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.* But Our Lord told him that the person who had bathed himself had no reason to wash any part of the body, except his feet, which he might have dirtied by walking from the bath.

When Our Blessed Lord had made an end of washing his disciples feet, he put on his garment, and, sitting down again at the table, explained to them the meaning of what he had done, viz. "That since he, who was justly acknowledged to be their Lord and Master, had condescended

“ so far as to *wash their feet*, they, in imitation
 “ of his example, ought to think it no dispa-
 “ ragement to them, to perform the meanest
 “ offices of kindness and charity to each other:
 “ for, though they were exalted to the dignity
 “ of his apostles, yet still they were but his ser-
 “ vants; and that therefore it would be an high
 “ piece of arrogance in them to assume more
 “ state and grandeur than their Master had done
 “ before them.”

After saying this, Our Blessed Lord told them, that though he had called them all to the apostle-ship, and well knew the secret disposition of every heart before he chose them, they need not be surprized that one among them should prove a traitor, as it was done, that the scripture might be fulfilled, *He that eateth bread with me hath lift up his heel against me.* This moving declaration greatly affected the disciples, and they began every one of them to say to their Master, *Lord, Is it I?* But Jesus not giving them any decisive answer, John, his beloved disciple, who stood nearest him, asked, in a soft tone of voice, who among the disciples would be guilty of so detestable a crime? Jesus told him that the person to whom he should give the sop, when he had dipped it, should betray him. Accordingly, as soon as he had dipped the sop in the dish, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, saying to him, at the same time, *what thou doest, do quickly.* The rest of the apostles were totally ignorant of the signal which Our Lord had given to his beloved disciple John, and therefore, when they heard the words *what thou doest, do quickly*, they supposed it to be an order given to Judas (as he was the purse-bearer) either to bestow something on the poor, or to provide what was necessary for the celebration of the ensuing feast.

As soon as supper was ended, Judas, being now confirmed in his wicked resolution, left Bethany, and went to Jerusalem. On his arrival there, understanding that the Sanhedrim was met at the high-priest's house, he immediately repaired to the place, and offered, upon their giving him a sufficient reward, to betray his Master, and to deliver him privately into his hands. This proposition was highly pleasing to the council, who immediately bargained with him for thirty pieces of silver; and, when Judas had received the money, he, from that moment, sought an opportunity to betray his Master in the absence of the multitude, though he immediately returned, and associated himself with his fellow disciples.

While Judas was thus bartering for his Master's blood, Our Blessed Lord was preparing the rest of his apostles for his departure, and endeavouring to comfort them with this consideration: That his death would be a means of displaying both his own, and his Father's glory, as it was a preliminary to his resurrection and ascension into heaven. As, therefore, it was decreed that he must leave them, the stronger should their union be with each other; and therefore he very earnestly recommended to them the duty of mutual love, a duty which had hitherto been so much neglected, that His enjoining them might well be accounted a new commandment, and what was to be the common badge and character of his true disciples ever after.

On the day preceding that of the passover, Our Lord sent Peter and John to Jerusalem, to prepare all things necessary for the celebration of the passover; and, lest they should want a convenient room for that purpose, he predisposed the heart of a certain host in the city to accommodate them with one. *Go ye (said he) into the city; and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the good man of the house, The master saith, Where is the guest-chamber where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he will shew you a large upper-room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us.* Mark xiv. 13, &c.

In obedience to these orders Peter and John immediately repaired to Jerusalem, and having provided a lamb, slain it in the temple, sprinkled its blood on the altar, and done every thing else that was required of them, they returned to their Master at Bethany. Our Lord, perceiving that his late discourse to his disciples about leaving the world and them, had destroyed all their hopes of secular greatness, and left them melancholy and disconsolate, stayed the greater part of the day with them in order to raise their drooping spirits. To effect this he assured them of an happy immortality, which (as he told them) he was going before to prepare for them in heaven, and wanted not power to do it, because he and his Father (as to their divinity) were perfectly the same. He farther promised to send them the Holy Spirit from above, which he represented as a comforter to support them in their afflictions; as a teacher, to instruct them in all necessary truths; and as an advocate, to plead and defend their cause against all their enemies. He told them that, from these considerations, they had no reason to be dejected, because, in this sense, he would be always with them; because, whatever they asked in his name, his Father would give them; and because, when he was gone, they should be enabled to do miracles greater than what they had seen him do. And therefore, *Peace I leave with you (says he,) my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.* John xiv. 27.

As soon as Our Blessed Lord had finished his discourse, he arose, and, with his disciples, repaired to Jerusalem, whither they had no sooner arrived than they went into the house which had been prepared for them for celebrating the passover. Towards the evening they sat down to table, soon after which Our Lord began to renew the discourse *that one in the company should certainly betray him, but that better it had been for the man who did so if he had never been born.* This occasioned so general a concern and sadness, that every one began to enquire for himself, whether he was the man? At length it came to Judas's turn, who, having the confidence to ask the same question, received a positive answer *that he was*: whereupon he soon withdrew from his Master, and joined himself to his enemies, who were impatiently expecting the performance of his promise.

The paschal supper being ended, Our Blessed Lord proceeded to the institution of another, in commemoration

commemoration of his own death and passion. *And Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, Take, eat: This is my body.* Matth. xxvi. 26. Observe this rite in remembrance of me, who, by dying for you, will bring you out of the spiritual bondage, a bondage far worse than the Egyptian under which your ancestors groaned, and will establish you in the glorious liberty of the children of God. Do it in remembrance of me, who, by laying down my life, will ransom you from sin, from death, from hell, and will set open the gates of heaven to you that you may enter immortality in triumph.

After having given the bread to his disciples, Our Lord took the cup of wine, and having, in like manner, blessed it, he gave it among them, saying, *Drink ye all of it, for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.* Matth. xxvi. 27, 28. All of you, and all who profess the Gospel in all ages, must drink of this cup, because it represents my blood shed for the remission of the sins of mankind; and by which the new covenant between God and man is ratified. It is, therefore, my blood of the new covenant; so that this institution exhibits to your joyful meditation the grand basis of the hopes of the children of men, and perpetuates the memory of it, to the end of the world. He added, *I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you, in my Father's kingdom.* Matt. xxvi. 29.

This manifestation of the Son of God is the most illustrious, and most momentous event that ever occurred, and must certainly engage the attention and meditation of every serious Christian. To his life and death, his resurrection and ascension into glory, we are indebted for our hopes and assurances of pardon, for our peace, and for our happiness. To procure our benefit, he condescended to put on him the veil of flesh: he poured Divine instruction from his lips, and shone forth an all-perfect and all lovely example. For our benefit he submitted to a course of the most cruel treatment, to the agonies of the cross, and to the stroke of the king of terrors. For our benefit he arose again with power and lustre, and ascended into the mansions of eternal happiness. With the greatest wisdom and goodness, therefore, did the beneficent Jesus institute a rite, which should recall his love to our memories, and awake each pious passion in our breast; a rite which, by the breaking of bread, and the pouring out of wine, should represent to us, in a striking manner, that most signal proof of the affection both of him and his heavenly Father, when his tender frame was exposed to wounds and bruises, and when streams of the most precious blood issued from his body, for our sakes.

The more we reflect on this instance of Divine love, the more we shall perceive that there was a peculiar propriety in pointing out, by a particular ordinance, a circumstance of such immense importance. Nay, we may even venture to assert, that in some dark and corrupt ages, when the scriptures were little known by the common people, and hardly studied by the priests, the death of Our Saviour might have been almost

forgotten, had not the remembrance of it been renewed by the celebration of this sacred ordinance. It should also be remembered, that the vanities of the world, the allurements of sensual pleasure, the charms of ambition, the splendor of riches; in short, temptations from worldly objects of every kind, have often too fatal an influence on our tempers and conduct. They have a fatal tendency to draw the mind aside to folly, and to obliterate the practices of things Divine. It was, therefore, a wise, a kind intention of Our Great Redeemer, by a frequent repetition of the sacramental feast, to call back the wandering heart of man to a sense of his duty and obligations as a Christian.

The important, the awful scene was now approaching, when the great work was to be finished. The traitor Judas was gone to the chief priests and elders, for a band of soldiers to apprehend him: but this did not discompose the Redeemer of mankind: he took occasion to meditate on the glory that would accrue, both to himself, and to his Father, from those sufferings, and mentioned the same to his disciples. *Now (said he) is the son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.* He also told them, that, having already done honour to his Father, by the past actions of his life, and being about to honour him yet farther by his sufferings and death, which would display his perfections, particularly his infinite love to the human race, in the most astonishing and amiable light, he was, in his turn, to receive honour from his Father, intimating, that he was to be exalted to the right hand of Omnipotence.

Some of the apostles, still imagining that Our Lord spoke of the glory of a temporal kingdom, their ambition was again revived, and they fell into unseasonable contentions about priority, or who should have the office of the highest trust and honour about their Master. This contention was highly offensive to Our Lord, who reproved them for their conduct, and then adjusted their disputes by the same kind of arguments he had used on a former occasion. He told them that among the Gentiles those were reckoned the greatest who had the greatest power, and exercised it in the most absolute manner; but that their greatness should be very different: that whosoever was desirous of being great, or chief among them, must be so by his humility, and the service he rendered to the rest, in imitation of him who had been a servant to them all. At the same time, to check their ambition, and lead them to form a just notion of his kingdom, he told them that he was soon to leave them, and that whither he was going, they could not at that time follow him; for which reason, instead of contending with one another which of them should be the greatest, they would do well to be strongly attached to each other in the happy bonds of unity and love.

Peter's mind was particularly impressed with the words which Our Lord had spoken concerning his going to a place whither his disciples could not come. He therefore asked him, *Where he was going?* To which Jesus replied, *Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards.*

In order to make his disciples farther humble, watchful, and kindly affectionate towards each other, he assured them that Satan was seeking to ruin them all by his temptations: but in doing of this he particularly addressed himself to Simon. *Simon, Simon, (said he) behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren.* Peter was greatly displeased that his Master should have singled him out as the weakest, for so he interpreted his praying for him particularly; and supposing that he mentioned Satan's seeking to sift him, as the thing which would hinder him from following his Master, *he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee into prison, and to death.* But Jesus, knowing his weakness, replied, *I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.* Luke xxii. 34.

After Our Blessed Lord had thus spoken to Peter in particular, he turned himself to the rest of his disciples, and addressed the whole in words to this effect: "When I sent you formerly to preach the Gospel, I ordered you to go without any provision, either for your sustenance or defence, assuring you, that though you would, indeed, meet with great opposition, yet Providence would dispose some men in all places to be your friends, and to furnish you with all necessities; and accordingly you found that you wanted for nothing, but were wonderfully supported, without any care or provision of your own, in the whole journey, and finished your work with success. But now the case is very different: the time of that greatest trial and distress, whereof I have often forewarned you, is just at hand; and you may now make all the provision in your power, and arm yourselves against it, as much as you are able. I have finished the work for which I was sent into the world; and nothing now remains for me, but to undergo the sufferings which the prophets have foretold concerning me, and to complete the wise dispensation of Providence, by submitting at last to a cruel and ignominious death."

The disciples, thinking that their great Master meant that they should arm themselves in a literal sense, and endeavour to oppose the assaults that would be shortly made upon them by the Jews, answered, *Lord, here are two swords.* But the Blessed Jesus, who intended only to convey an idea of their approaching distress and temptations, and to arm them against the attacks they might meet with, replied, *It is enough; you need not trouble yourselves about any more weapons of this nature for your defence.* Be not terrified and disconsolate, because I have told you that I must undergo great sufferings, and be taken away from you for a time. You have always been taught to believe in God, who is the Almighty Preserver and Governor of all things; and to rely on him for deliverance in every affliction and distress.

Having said this, they finished the passover with singing an hymn, immediately after which Our Lord quitted the place, and retired with his disciples to the Mount of Olives.

On their arrival at the place which was to be

the scene of Our Lord's sufferings, he desired them to fortify themselves by prayer, and forewarned them of the terrible effects his sufferings would have upon them. He told them that what he should undergo would make them all tremble, agreeable to the prediction of the prophet Zachariah: *I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.* To strengthen their faith, however, he not only mentioned his own resurrection, but told them they should see him in Galilee after he was risen from the dead.

On Our Lord's mentioning the effect that his sufferings would have upon his disciples, Peter recollected what had been said to him in particular before they left the house where they had been celebrating the passover. Grieving, therefore, afresh, to find his Master entertain such thoughts of him, and being now armed with a sword, the vehemence of his temper urged him to boast a second time of his courageous and close attachment to his Master. *Though all men (said he) should be offended because of thee, yet I never will be offended.* But Jesus, knowing that human confidence was weak and frail, thought proper to forewarn him again of his danger; and therefore told him, that the cock should not crow before he had denied him thrice. Peter, however, still continued to repeat his confidence, saying, *If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise.* And all the rest of the disciples joined with Peter in professing their fixed resolution of suffering death rather than they would deny their Master.

The compassionate Redeemer of mankind, not willing to lose one single moment of the short time of his ministry that yet remained, continued to instruct his disciples in the great truths he came into the world to explain: and from the vines that were growing round him on the Mount of Olives, delivered to them his last and most excellent discourse, the substance of which was to the following effect:

"Hitherto the Jewish church and nation have been the peculiar care of Providence, in like manner as a choice vine, likely to bring forth much fruit, is the especial care of the husbandman. But from henceforth, my church, my disciples, and the professors of my religion, of what country or nation soever they be, shall become the people of God, and the peculiar care of Divine Providence. I will be to them as the root and stock of a vine, of which they are the branches, and my Father the husbandman and vine-dresser. As in the management of a choice vine, the skilful vine-dresser cuts off all barren and superfluous branches, that they may not burthen nor exhaust the tree, and prunes and dresses the fruitful branches, that they may grow continually and bear more fruit; so, in the government of my church, all useless, wicked, and incorrigible members, my Father, by his judgment, will cut off and destroy; but those who are sincerely pious and good, he will, by the various and merciful dispensations of his Providence towards them, try, purify, and amend, that they may daily improve, and be more and more abundant in all good works.

"Now ye, my apostles, are such members as these

these, being purified in heart and mind, and prepared for every good work, by your lively faith in me, and sincere resolutions to obey my commands. Continue stedfastly in this state, and then you may be sure of obtaining all spiritual blessings from me, as the branches receive sap and nourishment from the vine. But as a branch, without continuing on the vine, cannot bear any fruit, but presently dries up and perishes; so ye, unless ye continue stedfast in your communion with me, by a lively faith and sincere obedience, so as to receive grace and spiritual blessings, can never bring forth any good fruit of true holiness and righteousness, but will fall into vanity, and superstition. In this case ye shall be cast out from me, and perish for ever, even as a fruitless branch is cut off from the vine, left to wither and dry, and is, at last, burnt in the fire.

“ But if you continue in me, by believing my words, and holding fast that ye believe, and obeying and practising it accordingly, no power, or malice, either of man or of devils, shall be able to hurt you, or oppose your doctrines. For though I be absent from you in body, yet I will hear your prayers, and my Father himself also will hear you: and whatsoever ye shall ask, for the glory of God, and the propagation of my true religion in the world, shall certainly be granted you. But above all things, carefully remember to demonstrate your continuance in me, by abounding in all good works of holiness, righteousness and charity. This is the honour which my Father desires and expects from you; even as it is the glory and desire of a vine-dresser that his vine should bring forth much fruit. And this is the honour that I myself expect from you, that ye should prove yourselves to be really and indeed my disciples, by imitating my example, and obeying my commands. This ye are bound to do, not only in duty, but in gratitude also; for as my Father hath loved you, so have I also loved you; and ye, in like manner, ought to love me again, that you may continue to be loved by me. But the way to express your love towards me, and to continue to be loved by me, is to keep my commandments; even as I, by keeping my Father's commandments, have expressed my love towards him, and continue to be loved by him.

“ These things do I speak to you before my departure, that the comfort ye have had in my presence may be continued in my absence, and even increased to the coming of the Holy Spirit, as it will be upon the condition that I have so often repeated to you, namely, that you keep my commandments. And the principal of these commandments is, that ye love one another; not after the common fashion of the world, but in such a manner as I have loved you; nor can you be ignorant of what sort of love that is, when I tell you that I am now going to lay down my life for you. This is the highest instance in which it is possible for any person to express his love towards his greatest friends and benefactors: but this I am now going to do for you, and for all mankind. I do not consider you as my benefactors, but as my friends, upon this easy condition only, that ye keep my commandments. I might, indeed, justly call you servants, consi-

dering the great difference between me and you, and the obligation ye have to obey my commandments; but I have not treated you as servants, who are not admitted into their master's counsels, but as friends, revealing to you the whole will of my Father, with all freedom and plainness. I have behaved myself to you as to the nearest friends. Not that you first obliged me, or did any acts of kindness for me; but I have freely, and of my own good pleasure, chosen you to be my apostles, and the preachers of my Gospel, that you may go and declare the will of God to the world, and bring forth much and lasting fruit in the conversion of men to the profession and practice of true religion and virtue. In the performance of this work, whatsoever ye shall ask of my Father in my name, in order to enable you to perform it effectually, and with full success, shall certainly be granted unto you.

“ Now all these things which I have spoken unto you concerning the greatness of my love towards you, in choosing you to be my apostles, in revealing unto you the whole will of my Father, and in laying down my life for you, I have urged and inculcated, as I at first told you, chiefly for this reason, that ye may learn, after my example, to *love one another*. The world, indeed, you must expect will hate and persecute you on my account. But at this you ought not to be surprized or terrified, knowing that it is no worse treatment than I myself have met with before you. Be not, therefore, surprized when ye meet with opposition; nor think to find better treatment in the world than I have done. Remember what I have already told you, that the disciple is not above his Master; nor is he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If men had generally and readily embraced my doctrine, you might, indeed, have had some reason to expect that they would willingly have received yours also. But since I myself have suffered great indignities and persecutions from wicked and perverse, from obstinate and incorrigible men, only for opposing their vices, it is highly reasonable that you should expect to undergo the like treatment upon the like account. In all your sufferings, however, you will have this comfortable consideration to support you, that the justice of your own cause, and the injustice of your persecutors will, by those means, most evidently appear; seeing ye are persecuted only for professing and preaching, in my name, the doctrine of true religion and virtue; and they persecute you only because they know not God, and out of mere malice, will not bear to be instructed in his commands.

“ But notwithstanding all the opposition that wicked and incorrigible men will make against my doctrine, there will not be wanting powerful promoters of it, who shall effectually overcome all opposition. For the comforter, whom I said I would send you from heaven, even that *spirit of truth*, which cometh forth, and is sent from the Father, shall, when he cometh, with wonderful efficacy, bear testimony to the truth of my doctrine, and cause it to be spread through the world with incredible success. Nay, and ye yourselves also, though now so weak, fearful and doubting, shall then very powerfully bear testimony to the truth of all the things whereof ye,

having

having been all along with me, have been eye-witnesses from the beginning.

“ Thus have I warned you before-hand of the opposition and persecution ye must expect to meet with in the world, that when it cometh, ye may not be surprized and terrified, so as to be discouraged thereby from persevering in the performance of your duty. Ye must expect, particularly, that the chief priests, and rulers of the Jews, men of great hypocrisy and superstition, zealous for their ceremonies and ritual traditions, but careless to know and obey the will of God in matters of great and eternal obligation, and invincibly prejudiced against the spiritual holiness and purity of my doctrine. These you must expect will excommunicate you as apostates, and cast you out of all their societies, as the vilest of people. Nay, to such an absurd height of malice will their superstition carry them, that they will even fancy they promote the service of God, and the cause of religion, when they most barbarously murder and destroy you. But I have warned you of all this before-hand, that ye may prepare and fortify yourselves against it; and that when it cometh to pass, ye may remember, I foretold it to you, and your faith in me may thereby be strengthened.

“ Being now about to leave you, I think it necessary to mention what things are likely to come upon you after my departure, and also, at the same time, to inform you what comfort you may expect to support you under them. You may be assured that great temptations will befall you in my absence. This, indeed, ye readily apprehend, and suffer your hearts to be overwhelmed with grief at the thoughts of it. But the comfortable part of my discourse, namely, that my departure is only in order to return to him that sent me, and that I will soon after send you the Holy Spirit, and the other advantages that will thence result to you, are neither considered, nor are you solicitous about them. Nevertheless, if ye will listen, I will plainly tell you the truth. Ye are so far from having reason to be dejected at the thoughts of my departure, that on the contrary it is really profitable and expedient for you that I should now go; for such is the order and dispensation of Providence towards you, and the appointment of my Father's eternal and all-wise counsel, that before I go and take possession of my kingdom, the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, cannot be sent unto you; but when I am departed from you, and have all power in heaven and earth committed unto me, then I will send him unto you. And when he cometh he shall abundantly support and comfort you under all your troubles: shall powerfully plead your cause against your adversaries; and shall, with wonderful efficacy, cause the doctrine of the gospel to spread and prevail in the world against all opposition. He shall particularly, and in a most extraordinary and convincing manner, make the world sensible of the greatness and heinousness of a sin of which they were not aware; of the righteousness and justice of a dispensation they did not understand, and of the execution of a judgment they did not expect. First, by wonderfully attesting and confirming the truth of my doctrine, by the gift of

tongues; and other wonderful signs, he shall convince the world of the greatness and heinousness of their sins; in disbelieving and rejecting me. Secondly, by demonstrating, that my departure out of the world was not perishing and dying, but only a returning to my Father; in order to be invested with all power both in heaven and earth, he shall convince the world of the righteousness and justice of my cause, and of the excellency of that dispensation, which I preach and declare to mankind. Lastly, by mightily destroying the power of the devil and the dominion of sin, and propagating the doctrine of true religion in the world, with wonderful efficacy and success, he shall convince men of my power and authority to execute judgment upon mine enemies for the establishment of my kingdom upon earth.

“ There are yet many other things hereafter to be done in relation to the settling and establishing of my church, which, if it were proper, I would now acquaint you with, but ye are not yet prepared to understand and receive them. Howbeit, when the spirit of truth, whom I promised you, is come, he shall enlarge your understandings; remove your prejudices, and instruct you in all necessary and Divine truths, to enable you to go through that great work which I have begun in person, and which I will carry on by your ministry, for the spirit is not to begin any new work, or to found any new doctrine, of himself. But as I have taught and will teach you only in my Father's name, so the spirit shall instruct you only in mine and my Father's will, and in things necessary to promote and carry on the same design. Every thing that he does shall be only in order to manifest my glory, and establish my religion in the world: even as every thing that I have done has been only to manifest my Father's glory, and reveal his will to mankind. For as all that I have taught is only what I received from my Father, so all that the spirit shall teach you is only what he receives from me. Whatsoever, I say, the spirit shall teach you, is only what he receives from me; for receiving from my Father, I call receiving from me, and teaching his will, is teaching mine; seeing all things that the Father hath are common to me, and all power and dominion by him committed to me. And now be careful to remember what matter for comfort I have given you, and support yourselves with it under the approaching distress. It is now, indeed, but a very little while before I shall be taken away from you; nevertheless let not this cause you to despair; for, after I am departed, it will be also a little while before I appear to you again; forasmuch as my being taken away from you, is not perishing, but only returning to my Father.”

The disciples of Our Blessed Lord, not being able to comprehend the meaning of the last part of his discourse, were greatly perplexed in their minds; and enquired of each other, what he could mean by telling them, that in a very little time he should be taken from them, and that in a very little time more they should see him again; and that because he went to his Father, *What is this that he saith unto us? A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again a little while, and ye shall see me; and, Because I go to the Father?*

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They said, therefore, what is this that he saith, A little while? We cannot tell what he saith. John xvi. 17, 18.

Our Blessed Lord, observing the perplexity of his disciples, and knowing that they were desirous of asking him for an explanation, readily saved them that trouble, by addressing himself to them in words to this effect: "Why are ye thus disturbed and perplexed about what I have told you? Is it a thing so very hard to be understood, that I said, within a very little time I should be taken away from you, and that within a very little time more I should appear to you again? Verily, verily, I tell you I must very soon depart out of this world: then the world, who are your enemies, will rejoice and triumph over you, as if they had destroyed me, and wholly suppressed you; and ye, for your parts, will be overwhelmed with grief and sorrow. But within a short time I will return to you again; and then your sorrow shall be turned into exceeding great joy. Even as a woman, when she is in labour, hath great pain and sorrow for the present, but as soon as she is delivered forgets all her sufferings, and rejoices greatly at the birth of her son; so ye, while ye are under the immediate apprehension of my departure from you, and during that time of distress and temptation which shall befall you in my absence, will be full of sorrow and anxiety of mind: but when I return to you again, then ye shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and no power or malice of man shall ever be able to take from you any more the cause or continuance of it. But though I shall return to you again, and your hearts will thereupon be filled with inexpressible joy, and which never shall be taken from you any more; yet there will be no necessity that I should then continue long with you in person, to instruct you upon every occasion, as I have now done with my own mouth. For besides that the Holy Spirit will be sent to instruct you in all things necessary, my Father himself also will hear your petitions, and be ready to grant you whatsoever you shall desire of him in my name, and as being my disciples. Hitherto ye have asked nothing of God in my name; but from henceforth put up your petitions in my name: and whatsoever ye shall so ask for the glory of God, and in order to enable you to go through the work of your ministry successfully, shall certainly be granted you: that your joy, which will begin at my appearing to you again, after my death, may be completed by the wonderful success and efficacy of your own ministry.

"These things I have told you, at present, imperfect and obscurely, according as your capacities are able to bear them. But the time is coming, when I will speak to you with more openness, freedom, and plainness, the whole will of my Father concerning the nature and establishment of my kingdom, and what things and in what manner ye ought to pray unto him for. After that time ye shall, with firm assurance, pray to my Father in my name for what ye want. And I need not tell you, that I will intercede with the Father on your behalf; for besides the love he has borne for me, and the power and authority my prayers have with him, he has moreover of

himself a great love for you, and a ready disposition to grant your prayers, because ye are become grateful and acceptable to him, by your love towards me, which ye have shown in embracing willingly that holy doctrine which I have revealed to you from him.

"To conclude: the sum of what I have told you, is briefly and plainly this. I came from God my Father, and have lived upon earth in the state of frail and mortal man, that I might reveal to mankind the will of my heavenly Father, and the way to attain eternal life and happiness: and now, having finished this great work, I am about to leave this world, and return again to my Father, from whence I at first came."

From these last words, which were more plain and express than any Our Lord had spoken before, his disciples clearly perceived that the departure he had so often mentioned was no other than his actually going out of this world; and therefore they made him a reply to this effect: "Now, Lord, you speak plainly, and without any figure; so that we apprehend fully what you mean. And now that our curiosity is satisfied, you have likewise greatly confirmed our faith, having given us a certain token whereby we are assured that you know all things, even the hearts and secret thoughts of men, since you have answered us a question which gave us great perplexity, and we were desirous to ask your opinion, but were afraid: but now we are convinced that you are endued with a truly Divine power, and did, indeed, come forth from God."

The answer Our Blessed Lord made his disciples in consequence of these acknowledgments, was to the following effect: "And do you now at length firmly believe in me? Are you resolved to continue steadfast in this faith? Do you think yourselves able to persevere immoveably in the profession of it? Be not confident of your own strength; but pray that ye may be delivered from temptation in the time of distress, such as will come upon you much sooner than ye expect: For I tell you, that ye will all of ye within a few hours utterly forsake me, and fly in hopes to secure yourselves, leaving me alone. And yet I should not say alone, since my Father is with me, who is more than all. I have, therefore, acquainted you with these things before-hand, that your minds may be furnished with sufficient matter of comfort and strength to bear up under all temptations, from the consideration of my having foretold not only what distress will befall you, but also how ye shall terminate your victory over all your enemies. You must, indeed, expect to meet with much affliction, but let not this discourage you. I have subdued the world: follow my example, and partake of my reward. *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.* John xvi. 33.

With these words Our Blessed Lord finished his discourse; immediately after which *he lift up his eyes to heaven*, and, in the most devout manner, prayed to his heavenly Father, not only in behalf of himself, but likewise his apostles, and all succeeding Christians. This most beautiful and beneficent prayer is contained in the

xviii chapter of the Gospel according to 'St. John; and the whole of it may be thus paraphrased :

" Oh Almighty Father, now the time of my suffering, for which I was sent into the world, is arrived. I most earnestly intreat thee to support me under it, and make me triumph over death by a glorious resurrection, and ascension into heaven : that by these means the glory may redound to thee, and cause thy will to be believed and obeyed through all the world, to the salvation of mankind, according to the full intent of that office and power with which thou didst originally invest me. In order to the bringing about this great design of salvation, I have declared thy will to mankind. I have published thy precepts, and discharged the great mission entrusted to me. I have preached the doctrine of repentance to salvation, and have finished the work which thou sentest me to do, to the glory of thy name upon earth. And now, to complete the great design, do thou, O Almighty Father, likewise glorify me with thine own self. Support me under my sufferings : let me prevail and triumph over death, by a glorious resurrection; and exalt me again to the same glory in heaven, which I had with thee before the creation of the universe. I have manifested thy will to the disciples, the men that thou gavest me out of the world. To those persons thou didst, in thine infinite wisdom, appoint, that thy truth should be made known : therefore, to them have I revealed the mysteries of thy kingdom, the precepts of thy Gospel, and the doctrine of thy salvation. And this doctrine they have willingly embraced, stedfastly adhered to, and sincerely obeyed. They are fully satisfied and convinced that what I taught them as from thee was really a Divine doctrine taught by thine immediate appointment and command ; and that I did not preach any human invention of men, but was really sent by thy Divine authority and commission.

" For these persons, therefore, I now pray, that as thou hast begun the work of their salvation, by my preaching and revealing to them thy will, while I have been present with them here upon earth ; so also that thou wouldest preserve them when I am departed from this world, and compleat the work of their salvation by my resurrection and ascension into heaven, after my death. I do not pray for the unbelieving impenitent world, but for those who have embraced that most holy doctrine, which thou hast taught them through me by my preaching ; for those who have glorified, and will glorify thy name, by their ministry, and who, consequently, are to be esteemed as thine own in common with me.

" I am now about to leave the world, in order to return to thee ; but these my disciples, who continue after me, I recommend to thy Divine protection, when I am gone ; endue them with powers to persevere in preaching and practising the truth, and to deliver the same holy doctrines which I have given to them, that so they may remain inseparably united to me, as I am to thee. So long as I have been with them in the

world, I have watched over them, and kept them from falling away, both by example, preaching, and continual admonition, according to the power and authority which thou didst commit to me ; nor has one of my apostles miscarried under my care, except that perfidious traitor, who, as the scripture foretold, has ungratefully conspired with my enemies to destroy me, and will be punished according to his deserts. While I have continued with my disciples, I have watched over them and preserved them under mine own eye ; but now, as I am going to leave the world, I beseech thee to keep and assist them by thy good spirit ; and let the expectation of their continuing under thy special care and protection, be their comfort and support in my absence. The world, indeed, will persecute and hate them, on this account, as my doctrine is repugnant to the lust and affections, the passions, designs, and inclinations of worldly men ; it must necessarily be that the vicious and incorrigible world will oppose and persecute them, as it has before persecuted me. I beseech thee, therefore, take them under thy particular care, to support them against the violence and oppression of an evil world. I do not desire that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but preserve them in it to be instruments of thy word, thy glory, and to be teachers of thy truth ; nor suffer them to be either destroyed by the malice and violence, or corrupted by the evil custom and opinions, of a perverse and wicked generation. They are of a temper and spirit very different from the current affection and common dispositions of the world, according to the example of purity which I have set before them. Do thou preserve and increase in them that moderation and candour of mind, cause them to be thoroughly affected and impressed with that true doctrine so frequently recommended to them from my mouth, so as to express it visibly in their lives and practice, and to promote it zealously in their preaching, that they may, both by word and good example, become worthy and successful ministers of my gospel.

" As thou hast sent me into the world to reveal thy will to mankind, so send I these my apostles to continue preaching the same doctrine begun by me. And the principal design of my exemplary life, constant teaching, and now voluntarily offering myself to death for it is, to sanctify and enable them to preach with success and efficacy for the salvation of men. Neither pray I for these my apostles only, but for all others, who shall, by their preaching and practice, promote thy true religion ; and being converted from the world, may, by their sincere endeavours, go on to reform others, convincing the world of the excellency of their religion, and consequently enforcing men to acknowledge the truth and Divine authority thereof. For promoting which great end, I have communicated to my apostles the same power and authority of doing mighty works for the confirmation of their doctrine, and the evidence of thy truth, as thou didst communicate to me ; that so I working in them, as thou hast done in me, and thus confirming with great efficacy and demonstration of the spirit, they may establish the same doctrine

doctrine which I published in person, the world may, by this evidence, be convinced that I was really sent by thee, and that my disciples act by the same Divine commission.

"Holy and Almighty Father, all those whom thou hast thus given me, who have heartily embraced my doctrine, and sincerely obeyed it, I desire that thou wouldest make them partakers of the same happiness with myself, and exalt them to behold the incomprehensible glory wherewith thou didst originally invest me, in thy eternal love, before the foundation of the world. The generality of mortals, O righteous Father, have not known thee, nor been willing to embrace and obey the revelation of thy will. But I have known thy will, and have made it known to my disciples, men of simplicity and honesty; and they have embraced and obeyed it. And I will make it known to them, more and more, that they may grow up and improve in faith, in holiness, and in all good works, so as finally to arrive, and cause others to arrive, at that eternal happiness, which is the effect of thy infinite love towards me, and through me towards them."

After Our Lord had finished this pious and benevolent prayer, he left the Mount of Olives, and, accompanied by his disciples, crossed the brook Cedron, and proceeded to a place called Gethsemane, where was a garden well known to Judas, because thither Our Lord and his apostles used frequently to repair, both for retirement and devotion.

When Our Lord approached the entrance of the garden of Gethsemane, he ordered his disciples to sit down till he should retire to pray, taking with him only Peter, James and John, those three select disciples whom he had before chosen to be witnesses of his transfiguration.

The sufferings Our Blessed Lord was now on the point of undergoing were so great, that the very prospect of them greatly affected him, and made him express himself in this doleful exclamation: *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here, and watch.* On this great occasion he sustained those grievous sorrows in his soul, by which, as well as by dying on the cross, he became a sin-offering, and accomplished the redemption of mankind.

Our Blessed Lord now left his three favourite disciples, and retiring a small distance from them, prostrated himself on the ground, beseeching of God, that if it was possible (as all things were possible to him) he might be excused from drinking the bitter potion; but at the same time expressed his entire submission to the Divine will. *O my Father* (said he) *if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.* Matth. xxvi. 39. Having prayed to this effect, he returned to his apostles, but finding them asleep he awoke them, and, in a reproof full of love, reminded Peter more especially of his late promises, and present neglect of him, when he most stood in need of his comfort and assistance. *What* (said he) *could ye not watch with me one hour? Thou, who so lately didst boast of thy courage and constancy in my service; canst thou so soon forget thy master? He then advised Peter to keep himself awake,*

for fear of the temptations that were busy about him, and added this compassionate observation, that though *the spirit was willing, and ready enough to make good resolutions, yet the flesh was weak, and unable, very often, to put them in execution.*

Thrice did Our Blessed Lord retire, and pray in like manner to his heavenly Father; but, in the last time, his sense of God's indignation against the sins of mankind, and the dismal prospect of what he was to suffer in the expiation of them, made his prayer more vehement, and his agonies so violent, that the sweat which fell from his body was like large drops of blood; and *human nature must have been exhausted under it, had not an angel from heaven been immediately sent to strengthen and support him.*

After receiving this Divine refreshment, Our Blessed Lord returned the third time to his apostles; but finding them still in the same sleepy condition, he told them, that they might sleep on as long as they pleased, because he had no farther occasion for their assistance; but that it would not be improper for them to arise, because the traitor, who was to deliver him up to his enemies, was just at hand. *Sleep on now* (said he) *and take your rest; behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; he is at hand that doth betray me.* Matth. xxvi. 45, 46. The event will soon be over, which causes your sorrow: I am betrayed, and ready to be delivered up to death.

Our Blessed Lord had no sooner spoke these words, than the perfidious Judas, accompanied by a band of soldiers and officers, together with some of the chief priests, Pharisees, and elders of the people, all armed with swords and staves, entered the garden in order to apprehend him. To prevent all mistakes, the traitor Judas had given them a sign, that the person, whom he should kiss, was the man they were to apprehend; and therefore, approaching Our Lord with an address of seeming civility, he saluted him, and, in return, received a reproof for his perfidy, but in such gentle and easy terms as spake a mind perfectly calm and undisturbed. *Judas, (said Our Lord) betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?* Our Lord then advanced forward, and, with an air of majesty, demanded of the soldiers whom they wanted? They told him Jesus of Nazareth. He replied, *I am he*; thereby intimating that he was willing to put himself into their hands. At the same time, to shew them that they could not apprehend him without his own consent, he, in a very extraordinary manner exerted his Divine power, by making the whole band fall back, and, for a time, depriving them of their natural strength. *Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus said unto them, I am he. And Judas also, who betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.*

But the soldiers, imagining, perhaps, that they had been thrown down by some demon, or evil spirit, with whom the Jews said he was in confederacy,

confederacy, advanced towards him a second time. *Then asked he them again, whom seek ye? and they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he, again expressing his willingness to fall into their hands. If, therefore, ye seek me, let these go their way; meaning, if your business be with me alone, do not interrupt my disciples. This request appears to have been made by Our Lord that the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.* For as he always proportioned the trials of his people to their strength, so he here took care that the disciples should escape the storm, which none but himself could sustain.

At length, some of the soldiers, more daring than the rest, began to lay hands on Jesus; upon which, some of the apostles, who were armed with swords, asked their Master if they might draw in his defence. But before he could give them an answer, Peter had drawn his sword, and, in great fury, struck at Malchus, one of the high-priest's servants, in doing which he happened to cut off his right ear. The enraged disciple was on the point of singly attacking the whole band, when Jesus ordered him to sheath his sword, telling him, that his unseasonable and imprudent defence might prove the occasion of his destruction. *Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.* He farther told him, that his conduct implied both a distrust of God (who could always make use of a variety of means for the safety of his people) and his ignorance in the scriptures. *Thinkest thou (said he) that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be? Matth. xxvi. 53.*

Our Blessed Lord, being tenderly inclined to prevent any bad consequences that might otherwise have arisen from Peter's rashness, touched the head of Malchus, and immediately healed him. Having done this, he turned about, and expostulated with the soldiers on the indignity of their apprehending him in so scandalous a manner, as if he had been a thief, or some vile malefactor, when they had frequent opportuni-

ties of taking him in the temple. *Be ye come out (said he) as against a thief, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness,* Luke xxii. 51, &c. They had hitherto kept at some distance, but drew nearer when they found Jesus was in their power; they were proof against all conviction, and resolutely bent on putting him to death.

When the apostles saw their Master in the hands of his enemies, they lost all their courage, and (as he had foretold) left him, and betook themselves to flight. *Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled. Then the band and the captain and officers took Jesus and bound him.* But it was not the cord which held him: his immense charity was by far a stronger bond. He could have broken those weak ties, and exerted his divinity in a more wonderful manner: he could have struck them all dead, with as much ease as he had before thrown them on the ground. But he patiently submitted to this, as to every other indignity which they had thought proper to offer him. He suffered himself to be disposed of agreeable to their will; and accordingly they led him away, in order to prosecute their designs of putting him to death.

When the soldiers had bound Our Lord, and were conducting him away, they observed a young man whom they took to be one of his disciples following him. Enraged at all those who were the followers of the Blessed Jesus, they attempted to seize him, but he having no other clothes on than a loose garment, slipped himself from it, and fled from them naked. This person, in all probability was the proprietor of the garden, who, being awakened with the noise made by the soldiers, and startled at the cause of it, hastily arose from his bed, and ran out with no other covering than a loose garment thrown over him. He might, probably, have had a respect for Jesus; and therefore, when he found him in the hands of his enemies, was desirous of following him to see what would be the issue of his then situation. But, on being seized by the soldiers, and considering his own danger, he slipped from them, and fled.



C H A P. XIII.

Our Blessed Lord is taken before the Sanhedrim, examined, and grossly insulted. Peter denies him thrice. Our Lord is condemned by the Sanhedrim, and carried before Pontius Pilate the Roman governor. The traitor Judas becomes his own executioner. Pilate publicly acquits Jesus, and refers his case to the decision of Herod, who remits him to Pilate. The Roman governor makes a speech to the rulers of the Jews in favour of Our Lord. The people are enraged against him, and insist upon his being put to death, in consequence of which Pilate, to excite their pity, and obviate their request of having him put to death, orders him to be scourged. The people are still resolute, upon which Pilate uses farther endeavours to appease their wrath, but without effect, and is at length obliged to comply with their unjust and severe demands. Our Blessed Lord is conducted to Mount Calvary, and there ignominiously crucified between two notorious malefactors. Is reviled and ill treated by several of the spectators. Strange phænomena appear during the time of his being fastened on the cross. Our Lord, after being some time on the cross, calls upon his heavenly Father, and then gives up the ghost.

AFTER the band of soldiers had apprehended Our Lord in the garden of Gethsemane, they first took him before Annas, who was father-in-law to Caiphas the high-priest, and had formerly discharged that office himself. But Annas, not chusing to interfere singly in so singular a matter, sent them to Caiphas, in whose palace, though it was late at night, the Sanhedrim were still sitting. Caiphas examined him very minutely concerning both his doctrine and disciples; in answer to which Our Blessed Lord told him, that, since he had always taught in the most public manner, in the synagogues, and in the temple, he should rather enquire of those who had been his constant hearers. *I spake openly to the world, (said he) I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? Ask them which heard me what I have said unto them; behold, they know what I said.* John xviii. 20, 21.

All the actions of Our Blessed Redeemer were done in public, and even in the presence of some of his most inveterate enemies. He, therefore, in his defence, very justly appealed to that part of his character; but his answer was construed as disrespectful, for *when he had thus spoken, one of the officers, which stood by, struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, answerest thou the high-priest so?* To which he meekly replied, with the greatest serenity of mind, *If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?* As if he had said, "Shew me, prove before this court, wherein my crime consists, or record it in the evidence on the face of my trial; which, if you cannot do, how can you answer this inhuman treatment to a defenceless person standing on his trial before the world, and in open court?"

The council perceiving that, from Our Lord's own confession, they could not lay any just accusation against him, called upon several false

witnesses, whom they had procured on the occasion; but these either disagreed in their relations, or came not sufficiently to the point. Two persons, indeed, were consistent in what they deposed, viz. that they had heard him say, he would pull down the temple (meaning himself when he spoke it) and in three days rebuild it. But as this accusation was false in fact, and only founded upon a *figurative* expression of Our Saviour's, it was not thought to amount to any thing capital.

Our Blessed Lord did not make any reply to the evidences that were produced against him. This greatly provoked the high-priest, who, supposing he intended, by his silence, to put an affront on the council, rose from his seat, and, in the most haughty and imperious manner, demanded the reason for so remarkable a conduct. *Answerest thou nothing? (said he) what is it which these witnesses against thee?* And some of the council added, *Art thou the Christ?* In answer to this Our Blessed Lord told them, that if he should tell them plainly they would not believe him; and if he should demonstrate it to them by the most evident and undeniable arguments, yet neither would they be convinced, or let him go.

The high-priest, finding all his endeavours to trapan Our Lord in vain, said to him, I adjure you, *by the living God*, in whose presence you now stand, that you tell us plainly and truly, whether or not thou art the Messiah, the Son of God?

Our Blessed Lord, being thus adjured by the chief magistrate of the council, immediately answered in the affirmative; and added, that they should shortly see a convincing evidence of the truth of what he said in the wonderful destruction he would bring on the Jewish nation; in the progress which the Gospel should make over the earth; and, finally, in his glorious appearance in the clouds of heaven at the last day, when he should come to judge the world.

And he went out
and wept bitterly.

Mat. XXVI. 75.



Le Brun pinx.

Collyer sculp.

PETER'S REPENTANCE.

On Our Blessed Lord's making this answer, a number of the council cried out at once, *Art thou the Son of God?* To which Our Great Redeemer replied, *Ye say that I am*: a manner of speaking among the Jews which expressed a plain and strong affirmation of the question asked.

When the high-priest heard this second assertion, he rent his cloaths with great indignation, and said unto the council, Why need we trouble ourselves to seek for any more witnesses? Ye yourselves, nay, this whole assembly, are witnesses that he hath spoken manifest and notorious blasphemy? To which they all replied, that, for assuming to himself the character of the Messiah, he deserved to be put to death.

After coming to this resolution the council broke up, and the members of it repaired to their respective homes, leaving Our Lord to the mercy of the soldiers and the high-priest's servants, who offered all the acts of violence and affrontery that they could invent to his sacred person. Some spit in his face, others buffeted him, others blindfolded him, and others again smote him with their fists, calling on him to prophecy who it was that struck him. Such was the treatment of the Son of God, who, though unworthy of it, bore it with patience and resignation, leaving mankind an example to follow his steps, and submit to the will of God in all things, nor murmur at any of the dispensations of his Providence.

During this melancholy scene, Peter, whose fears had made him flee from his Master in the garden, having a little recovered his spirits, and hoping to pass undiscovered in the throng, ventured in, among others, to see the issue of this fatal night, and, by the interest of his fellow-disciple John (who went with him) was let in by a maid-servant, to the high-priest's palace. It happened to be cold weather, and the servants and officers having kindled a fire in the common-hall, Peter went in, and sat down among them to warm himself. The maid-servant, who kept the door, followed Peter, and looking earnestly in his face, charged him with being one of Our Lord's disciples. *Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?* This blunt attack threw Peter into such confusion, that he flatly denied his having any connection with Jesus, replying, *I am not*, and adding, *I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest*. As if he had said, *I do not understand any reason for your asking me such a question*. Thus the very apostle who had but a short time before acknowledged his Master to be the Messiah, the son of the living God, and had so confidently boasted of his fortitude, and firm attachment to him in the greatest dangers, proved an arrant deserter of his cause upon trial. His shameful fears were altogether inexcusable, as the enemy who attacked him was one of the weaker sex, and the terror of the charge was in a great measure taken off, by the insinuation made in it that John was likewise known to be Christ's disciple: for as he was known at the high-priest's, he was consequently known in that character. *Art thou not also one of this man's disciples?* Art thou not one of them, as well as he who is sitting with you? Nothing

can account for this conduct of Peter, but the confusion and panic which had seized him, on this occasion. As his inward perturbation must have appeared in his countenance and gesture, he did not chuse to stay long with the servants at the fire. He went out, therefore, into the porch, where he was a little concealed. *And another maid saw him, and began to say to them that stood by, this is one of them; and he again denied it, with an oath, I know not the man; adding perjury to lying*.

After Peter had been thus attacked without doors, he thought proper to return and mix again with the crowd at the fire. *And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself*. From this circumstance we may conclude, that Peter left the porch where the second denial happened, and was come again into the hall. *Here one of the servants of the high-priest, (being his kinsman whose ear Peter had cut off) saith, did not I see thee in the garden with him? Peter then denied him again, and immediately the cock crew*. The words of Malchus's kinsman bringing to Peter's remembrance what he had done to that slave, threw him into such a panic, that when those who stood by repeated the charge, he impudently denied it: *He even began to curse and to swear, saying I know not this man of whom ye speak*. For when they heard Peter deny the charge, they supported it by an argument drawn from the accent with which he pronounced his answer. Surely thou art one of them; for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto: so that being pressed on all sides, to give his lie the better colour, he prophaned the name of God, by imprecating the bitterest curses on himself, if he was telling a falsehood.

Thus did Peter deny his master three distinct times, with oaths and asseverations, totally forgetting the vehement protestations he had made, a few hours before, that he would never deny him. From this circumstance we are taught two lessons: first, that the greatest resolutions formed on our own strength cannot withstand the torrent of temptation; and, secondly, that the true disciples of Christ, though they fall, shall be brought to a conviction of their sin: for no sooner had Peter denied his Master the third-time than the cock crew, and awaked in him the first conviction of his sin. *And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter, and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crew, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly*.

The circumstance of Our Blessed Lord's turning and looking on Peter is most beautifully described by the Evangelist St. Luke. It is reasonable to suppose that Our Lord was placed on some eminence at one end of the hall, where he had been examined by the council, and was surrounded by the officers left to take care of him, while Peter was at the other end with the servants at the fire; so that Our Lord could easily look towards Peter, and hear him denying him. This being observed by Peter, and the cock instantly crowing, brought his master's prediction fresh into his mind. He was stung with deep remorse, and being unable to contain himself, covered his face with his garment to conceal the confusion

he was in, and, going out into the porch, *wept bitterly*.

Early the next morning the Sanhedrim * met in a full body in the temple, whither they ordered Jesus to be brought; and, having again enquired of him whether or not he was the true Messiah, and again received the same answer as before, they adjudged him guilty of blasphemy, and accordingly sentenced him to death. The grand assembly, having thus condemned Our Lord, immediately resolved that he should be conducted to the palace of the Roman governor †, whose name, at that time was Pontius Pilate, in order that he might ratify their sentence, and grant a warrant for his execution.

In the mean time Judas Iscariot (who had delivered Our Lord into the hands of his enemies) watching the issue of these proceedings, and finding that his Master was delivered over to the secular power, repented of his perfidy, and was filled with the deepest remorse for what he had done. He saw all his golden dreams of temporal honours sunk at once to nothing; he saw his kind, his indulgent Master, condemned and forsaken by all his followers. He saw all this, and determined, if possible, to make some satisfaction for the crime he had committed.

In consequence of this repentance and resolution he went to the council-chamber, and confessed openly his sin before the chief priests and elders, *I have sinned* (said he) *in that I have betrayed the innocent blood*. He then offered them the money he had received to commit it, and earnestly wished he could recall the fatal transaction of the preceding night.

But this moving speech of Judas had no effect on the callous hearts of the Jewish rulers. They told him, that however he might think the prisoner innocent, and for that reason had sinned in bringing the sentence of death upon his head, they were not to blame; because they knew him to be a blasphemer, who deserved to die. *What is that to us?* said they; *see thou to that*. Nay, they even refused to take back the money they had given him as a reward for performing the base act of betraying his Master.

The deepest remorse now seized the mind of

the wretched Judas, and his soul was agitated with the horrors of despair. The innocence and benevolence of his Master, the many favours he himself had received from him, and the many kind offices he had done for the sons and daughters of affliction, crowded at once into his mind, and rendered his torment intolerable. Racked with those agonizing passions, and unable to support the misery, he threw down the wages of his iniquity in the temple; and, again confessing his own sin, and the innocence of his Master, went away in despair, and hanged himself. Thus died Judas Iscariot the traitor, a miserable example of the fatal influence of covetousness, and a standing monument of Divine vengeance to deter future generations from acting in opposition to the dictates of conscience, through a love of the things of this world: for which this wretched mortal betrayed his Master, his friend, his Saviour, and accumulated such a load of guilt upon himself as sunk his soul into the deepest abyss of despair, to shake off which he died an ignominious death by his own hands.

The pieces of silver, which Judas threw down in the council-chamber were gathered up, and delivered to the priests, who did not think proper to put them into the treasury, because they were *the price of blood*. They therefore agreed to purchase with them a piece of ground then called the *Potter's Field* ‡ (but afterwards *the Field of Blood*) as a place of interment for strangers.

When the members of the Sanhedrim arrived at the governor's palace, they refused to go into the judgment-hall §, for fear of contracting some pollution. Pilate, therefore, went out to them; and as he understood that they had already passed sentence on Our Lord, he demanded the grounds of their accusation against him. Though it was very natural for the governor to ask this question, yet the Jews thought themselves highly affronted by it; and being unwilling that any enquiry should be made in the particulars of their proceedings, answered in general, that if he had not been a criminal, they would not have brought him at all, much less at so early an hour.

Pilate

* The assembly, which was held the night before, and who had declared Our Lord deserving of death, was neither general nor judicial, according to the sense of the law, which did not allow of justice being administered in private, or in the night-time. And therefore the high-priests and rulers met again in the morning, in the council-chamber in the temple, (which they could not do the night before because it was then shut up) there to re-examine Our Saviour, and condemn him in form.

† The Roman governors of Judea generally resided at Cæsarea, but at the great feasts they went to Jerusalem (where was a palace appointed for their use) in order to prevent or suppress tumults, and to administer justice. Pilate, having been some time in Jerusalem before the feast, had been informed of the great ferment among the rulers, and the true character of the person on whose account it was raised. He therefore entertained a proper idea of the whole affair, and clearly saw through the malice and vindictive tempers of the rulers. *He knew that for envy they had delivered him*. He knew the cause of their envy, was impressed with a favourable opinion of Jesus, and resolved, if possible, to deliver him out of the hands of his vile persecutors.

‡ The spot of ground, called the Potter's Field, lay on the west side of the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and probably received its name from the people of that trade drying their pots there before they baked them. It was afterwards called the Field of Blood for the reason assigned by the Evangelist; but at present, from that veneration, which it has since obtained among Christians, it is named *Campo Santo*, or the *Holy Field*. It is a small spot of ground, not much above thirty yards long, and about half as much broad. One part of it is taken up by a square fabric about twelve yards high, built for a charnel-house, in the covering of which are some openings to let down the bodies that are to be there interred. At a small distance from this burial-place, is an intricate cave or sepulchre, consisting of several rooms one within another; in some of which it is said the apostles hid themselves when they forsook their Master, and fled.

§ In the governor's palace there was always a guard of Roman soldiers and a great company of servants; and, as they were heathens, the Jews thought that, by touching any of them, they should be defiled, and, consequently, made incapable of eating the passover, of which no unclean person was to partake.

Pilate then proceeded to examine Jesus; and finding he had not been guilty either of rebellion or sedition, but that he was accused of particulars relating to the religion and customs of the Jews, grew angry and said, What are these things to me? Take him yourselves and judge him, according to your own law. Plainly insinuating, that in his opinion the crime they laid to the prisoner's charge was not of a capital nature; and that such punishments as they were permitted by Cæsar to inflict were adequate to any misdemeanor that Jesus was charged with. But this proposal of the Roman governor was absolutely refused by the Jewish priests and elders, because it condemned their whole proceedings; and therefore they replied, that it was not permitted them to put any man to death.

Pilate, by these reserved answers, perceiving that their intention was to make him the instrument of their malice against an innocent man, refused to intermeddle any farther in the affair, unless they would exhibit some articles of accusation against him. Knowing, therefore, that Pilate was strongly attached to the Roman court, and a slave to its greatness, they alledged against Our Lord, that he had been guilty of seditious practices, by using every means in his power to dissuade the people from paying taxes to Cæsar, pretending that he himself was the Messiah, the great king of the Jews, whom they had so long expected. But they brought no proof of this assertion: they only insinuated that they had convicted him of this crime, which was absolutely false.

The name of king particularly struck the attention of Pilate, who asked Our Lord whether or not it was true what had been alledged against him, and whether he had really attempted to set himself up as king of the Jews? The answer Our Lord made to this was to the following effect. "Have you ever, during your stay in this province, heard any thing of me that gave you reason to suspect me guilty of secret practices and seditious designs against the government? Or do you found your question only on the present clamour and tumult that is raised against me? If this is the case, be very careful lest you be imposed on merely by the ambiguity of a word: for, to be king of the Jews is not to erect a temporal throne in opposition to that of Cæsar, but a thing of a very different nature: the kingdom of the Messiah is in the heavenly Canaan."

To this Pilate replied, *Am I a Jew?* Can I tell what your expectations are, and in what sense you understand these words? The rulers and chiefs of your own people, who are the most proper judges of these matters, have brought you before me as a riotous and seditious person: if this be not the truth, let me know what is, and the crime of which thou hast been guilty.

The answer Our Lord made to this was to the

following effect: "I have, indeed, a kingdom, and this kingdom I have professed to establish. But then it is not of this world, nor have my endeavours to establish it any tendency to cause disturbances in the government. Had that been the case my servants and followers would have fought for me, and not suffered me to have fallen into the hands of the Jews. But I tell you plainly, my kingdom is wholly spiritual. I reign in the hearts of my people, and bring their wills and affections into a conformity to the will of God."

Pilate then said unto Our Lord, *Art thou a king then?* To which the Blessed Jesus replied, *Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth beareth my voice.* As if he had said, "In the sense I have told you I do declare myself to be a king. For this very end I came into the world; and whoever sincerely loves, and is always ready to embrace the truth, will hear my testimony, and be convinced by it."

When Pilate found that Our Lord disclaimed all right to *secular* kingdoms, he thought he had not any thing to do with examining him about the nature of his *spiritual* empire; and therefore, withdrawing from the court into the vestibulum (where his accusers were impatiently expecting the ratification of their sentence, in order to execution) he, contrary to their hopes, told them, that *he found nothing worthy of death in him.* As if he had said, "I have again examined this man, but cannot find him guilty of any fault, which, according to the Roman law, is worthy of death."

When the chief priests and elders found themselves disappointed in their expectations, they grew exceeding clamorous, representing Our Lord as a turbulent disturber of the people, and charging him with spreading seditious principles through all Galilee and Judea, even as far as Jerusalem. *He stirreth up the people,* (said they) *beginning from Galilee to this place.*

Pilate hearing them name Galilee, and understanding, from enquiry, that Our Lord was a Galilean, and, consequently, belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, in order to get rid of the importunity of the Jews, and withal to free himself from this disagreeable affair, ordered him immediately to be taken before Herod, who, on account of the Passover, was then at Jerusalem.

Herod was no less pleased at the honour done him by Pilate, than glad of having the opportunity of seeing Jesus, hoping that he should have the pleasure of seeing him perform some great miracle. *And when Herod saw Jesus he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him: and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him.* Herod, however, soon found himself mistaken;

|| Pilate's government did not extent to Galilee: it included Judea only. Herod was at this time king, or tetrarch of Galilee, and, consequently, Jesus was his subject:

and therefore, according to the Roman laws, it was Pilate's duty to send him to Herod, especially as he was accused of rebellion, and a design to make himself a king.

taken; for, as he had apostatized from the doctrine of John the Baptist, to which he was once a convert, and had even put his teacher to death, the Blessed Jesus, however liberal of his miracles to the sons and daughters of affliction, would not work them to gratify the curiosity of a tyrant; nor would he even answer a single question put to him by Herod. This made the tetrarch consider him as an insignificant, despicable person; and accordingly, having committed him to the derision and insults of his guards, who used him with the utmost indignity, he ordered him to be immediately taken back to Pilate*, first putting on him an old robe, or garment, resembling in colour those worn by kings.

The enemies of Our Blessed Lord having reconducted him to the palace of the Roman governor, Pilate addressed himself to the priests and rulers of the people, in words to this effect. He told them, "that though they had brought this man before him as a seditious person, and a seducer of the people, yet, upon examination, he could not find him guilty of any of the crimes that were laid to his charge: that this was not his opinion only, but that Herod (who was a more competent judge of the affair, and to whom he had sent him on purpose to take cognizance of it) had no ways signified that his crimes were capital; and therefore, instead of taking away his life, he proposed some lesser punishment, if they thought fit, such as scourging him a little with whips, and then dismissing him." But this lenity was so disagreeable to their enraged tempers, that they peremptorily demanded execution, crying out, *Crucify him, crucify him*. Pilate, still tender of shedding innocent blood, expostulated farther with them on the impropriety of their conduct, desiring to know what *evil he had done*; for, as to his part, he could find no fault in him, much less any crime deserving of death. This, however, did but the more exasperate, and make them the more clamorous, for his speedy execution, *And they cried out the more exceedingly, crucify him*.

The Roman governor had still one expedient left in favour of Jesus, which he thought would not fail him. Every passover he was obliged, by a certain custom, to pardon one criminal whom the Jews should nominate; and therefore the people, being at this time urgent with him to grant them that usual favour, he proposed two persons to them: namely, Barabbas, a notorious malefactor, who, in an insurrection with some other seditious persons, had committed murder, and Jesus, who was called Christ. Pilate did not doubt but that the populace, whom he knew were better inclined to Our Lord than the rulers, would have preferred an innocent man to a thief and a murderer. But in this he found himself greatly mistaken; for, at the instigation of their priests, and others in authority, they desired that the favour might be granted to Barabbas. In

consequence of this Pilate desired to know what he was to do with the person whom they called Christ; upon which they, one and all, cried out, *Crucify him, crucify him*. Pilate still insisted on the innocence of Jesus, and requested that they would be satisfied with some lighter punishment than his being put to death: but this, instead of producing any good effect, only made them redouble their clamours, and, in the most tumultuous manner imaginable, demand that he might be crucified.

Just at this time Pilate received a message from his wife, then at Jerusalem, and who, that morning had been informed of something in a dream, which gave her great uneasiness. The dream had such an effect on her spirits, that she could not rest till she had sent an account of it to her husband, who was then sitting with the tribunal on the judgment-seat, at the same time beseeching him not to have any hand in the death of the righteous person he was then judging. "When he was set down on the judgment-seat his wife sent unto him, saying, *Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him*." Matth. xxvii. 19.

This message greatly affected Pilate, and made him still the more desirous of releasing Jesus, or at least of sparing his life. And therefore, in hopes of pacifying the rage of the multitude, and exciting their pity, he ordered him to be scourged.

The soldiers who were appointed to inflict this punishment on Our Lord, thinking it not sufficient to execute the simple orders of Pilate, thought proper to increase the punishment by measures of their own invention. They accordingly took Our Lord into the common-hall, where, after stripping him of his own cloaths, they put a loose purple coat about him, for a *robe*; a wreath of thorns upon his head, for a *crown*; and a reed in his hand, for a *sceptre*; and then, in derision, saluted him, and bowing their knees, mocked him with the sham profession of allegiance, saying, *Hail, king of the Jews*. After this, they spit in his face, smote him on the cheek, and (to make his crown of thorns pierce deeper into his flesh) several times struck him on the head. They then fastened him with cords to one of the pillars in the hall, and scourged him with such unrelenting cruelty, that the pavement was crimsoned with his most precious blood.

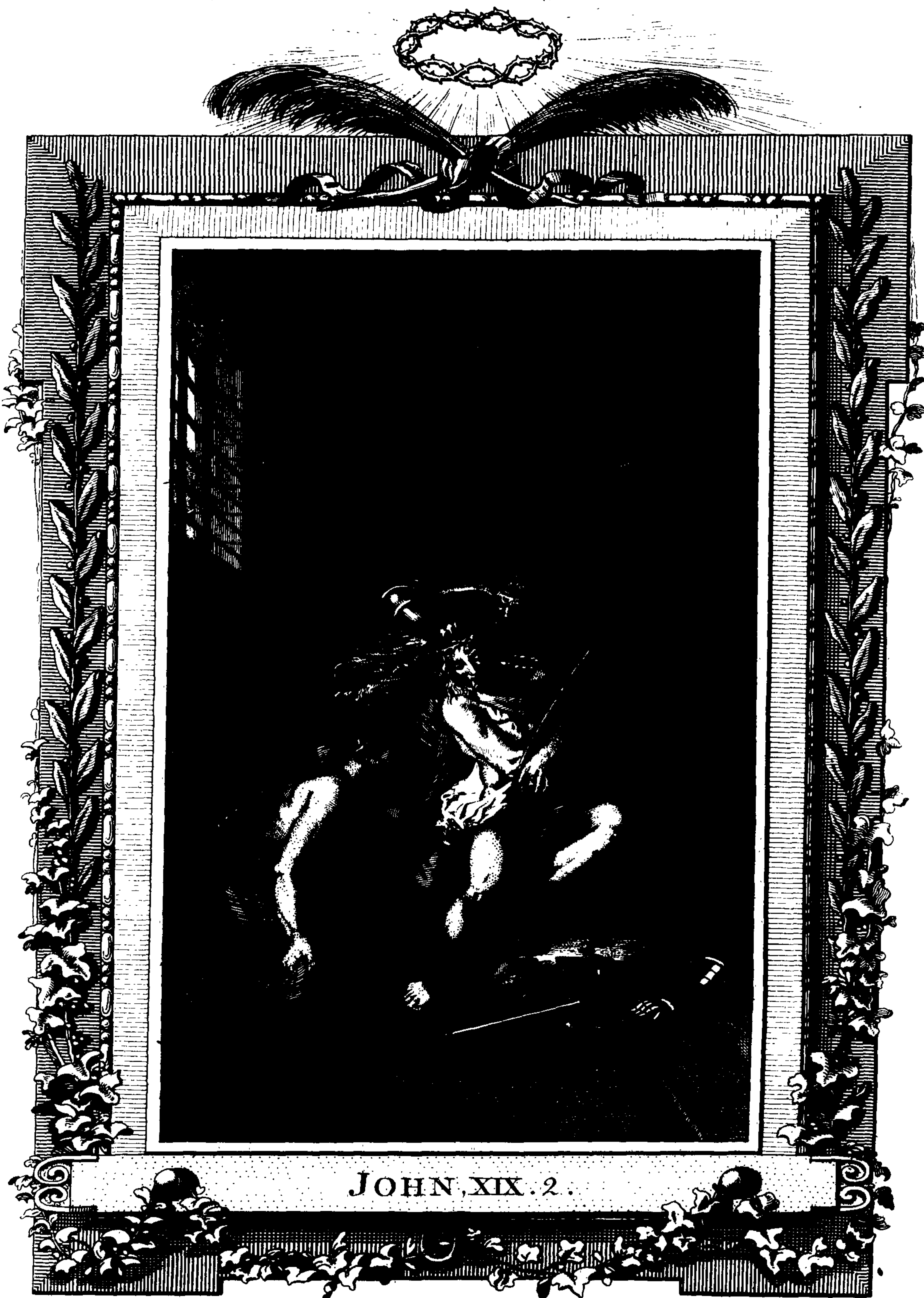
In this piteous plight, with his head, face and body embued in blood, and with all his mock ornaments on, Pilate, in hopes of moving the people's compassion, ordered Jesus to be brought forth. As soon as he appeared Pilate, addressing himself to the people, cried out, *Behold the man!* As if he had said, "Will nothing make you relent? Have ye lost all the feelings of humanity, and bowels of compassion? Can you bear to see the innocent, a son of Abraham, thus injured?"

But

* Herod and Pilate had been long at variance, but on this occasion, they became perfectly reconciled. It is generally thought that the cause of their difference was, the massacre that Pilate made of some Galileans at Jerusalem

during the time of the passover, (Luke xiii. 1.) which Herod resented, as an indignity put upon him, and an invasion of his authority, he being, at that time, tetrarch of Galilee.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



*The Soldiers placing a CROWN of THORNS on the Head of
OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR previous to his CRUCIFIXION*

But all this was to no purpose. The priests (whose rage and malice had extinguished not only the sentiments of justice, and feelings of pity, natural to the human heart, but also that love which countrymen usually bear each other) no sooner saw Jesus, than they began to fear the fickle populace might relent; and therefore, laying decency aside, they led the way to the multitude, by crying out, with all their might, *Crucify him! Crucify him!*

Pilate, vexed to see the Jewish rulers thus obstinately bent on the destruction of a person from whom they had nothing to fear that was dangerous, either with regard to their church or state, passionately told them, that if they would have have him crucified, they must do it themselves, for that he would not suffer his people to put to death an innocent man.

In answer to this, the chief priests and elders told Pilate, that, admitting the accusation which had been laid against the prisoner not to be true, yet he had committed such a crime in the presence of the whole council, as, by their law, deserved the most ignominious death. That he had spoken blasphemy, by calling himself the Son of God, a title which no mortal could assume without the highest degree of guilt. *We have a law, (said they) and by our law he ought to die, because he hath made himself the Son of God.*

These last words raised some terror in Pilate, and gave him still farther uneasiness. He probably recollected the miracles said to have been performed by Jesus, and (though an heathen himself) suspecting that he might be endued with some extraordinary powers, he began to apprehend that, if he proceeded to pass sentence on him, he should not only destroy an innocent person, but at once commit an act both of injustice and impiety. He therefore, returning with Jesus to the judgment-seat, began to enquire into his origin and pedigree: but as it was no part of Our Saviour's intention to escape death, he did not think proper to answer either of the questions asked by the governor, or to say any thing in his own justification. Pilate, being greatly surprized at Our Lord's silence, said unto him, *Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?* To which Our Blessed Lord replied, *Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.* As if he had said, "I well know that you

are Cæsar's servant, and accountable to him for your conduct. I forgive you any injury, which, contrary to your inclination, the popular fury constrains you to do unto me. Thou hast that power *from above*, from the emperor; for which cause, the Jewish high-priest, who hath put me into thy hands, and, by pretending that I am an enemy to Cæsar, forces thee to condemn me; or, if thou refusest, will accuse thee as negligent of the emperor's interest. He, therefore, is more guilty than thou." *He that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.*

This modest reply made such an impression on Pilate, that he more strongly represented to the people his desire of releasing Jesus; upon which, to work effectually upon his fears, the chief priests and rulers cried out, *If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar* *. If thou dost release the prisoner, who hath set himself up for a king, and endeavoured to raise a rebellion in the country, thou art unfaithful in the interest of the emperor thy master.

Pilate, who well knew the jealous temper of his master Tiberius, and how easily a wrong representation of these proceedings might prove his ruin, had not courage to withstand this forcible menace. He, therefore, returning to the judgment-hall, ordered Jesus to be brought before him to his public tribunal, which stood in a paved place called Gabatha †, in order to pass that sentence on him which he had been so repeatedly requested to do by his enemies. But previous to his discharging this melancholy office, he called for some water, and, washing his hands in the presence of all the people, solemnly declared, that he was *innocent of the blood of that just man*, and that they must answer for it: upon which the whole body of the people cried out, *His blood be on us, and on our children.* This was an imprecation of the most shocking nature, and which brought on them that just punishment they have ever since so fatally experienced.

Our Blessed Lord being thus condemned to the cross, the soldiers and officers, after repeating their former insults and indignities, took off the purple coat, and putting his own garments on him, and, having laid an heavy cross on his shoulders, led him away to his crucifixion. But when he came to the gate of the city, his strength was so much exhausted, that he was no longer able to stand under it. The fatigue of the preceding night spent without sleep, the sufferings

he

* This threat and accusation seems to be the grand reason why Pilate afterwards sent an account of Our Saviour and his crucifixion to the emperor Tiberius, in order to clear himself from any imputation that might be maliciously laid to his charge, and to make the emperor sensible who were the persons that had been the sole instruments of causing Our Lord to be put to death. The epistle, which Pilate wrote to the emperor on this occasion was to the following effect:

"Pilate to Tiberius, &c.

"I have been forced to consent at length to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, to prevent a tumult among the Jews, though it was very much against my will: for the world never saw, and probably never will see, a man of such extraordinary piety and uprightness. But the high-priest and

"Sanhedrim fulfilled in it the oracles of their prophets. "Whilst he hung on the cross, a horrid darkness, which covered the earth, seemed to threaten its final end. His followers, who say that he was risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and acknowledge him for their God, do still submit, and, by their excellent lives, shew themselves the worthy disciples of so extraordinary a Master. "I did what I could to save him from the malice of the Jews, but the fear of a total insurrection made me submit to his being crucified for the peace and interest of your empire."

† The word Gabatha, in the Syriac (which was the language then commonly spoken) signifies an *elevation*; and therefore the place, where Pilate had his tribunal erected, was probably a gallery or balcony belonging to his palace, and paved either with stone or marble.

he had undergone in the garden, his having been hurried from place to place, and obliged to stand the whole time of his trials; the want of food, and the loss of blood he had sustained, and not his want of courage on this occasion, made him faint under the burthen of his cross. The soldiers seeing him unable to bear the weight, laid it on one Simon, a Cyrenian (the father of Alexander and Rufus, well known among the first christians) and compelled him to bear it the rest of the way.

The Blessed Jesus, in his way to the place of execution, was followed by an innumerable multitude of people, among whom were many good and pious women, who bitterly lamented the severity of his sentence, and expressed the most conspicuous tokens of sincere compassion and grief on the occasion. Upon this Our Blessed Lord, turned himself about, and, with a benevolence and tenderness truly divine, said to them, *Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?* Luke xxiii. 28, &c. As if he had said, "Dry up these tears, ye daughters of Jerusalem, which ye shed in compassion to me, and reserve them for the deplorable fate of yourselves, and of your children; for the calamities that will soon fall on you and your offspring are truly terrible, and call for the bitterest lamentations. In those days of vengeance you will passionately wish that you had not given birth to a generation, whose wickedness had rendered them the objects of the wrath of the Almighty, to such a degree, as never was before experienced in the world. Then shall they wish to be crushed under the weight of enormous mountains, and concealed from their enemies in the bowels of the hills. If the Romans are permitted to inflict such punishments on me, who am innocent, how dreadful must the vengeance be, which they shall inflict on a nation, whose sins cry aloud to heaven, hastening the pace of the Divine judgments, and rendering the perpetrators as proper for punishment as dry wood is for the flames!"

When Our Blessed Lord came to the place of execution, which was called Golgotha †, or Mount Calvary, the soldiers, before they nailed him to the cross, offered him a potion of vinegar mixed with gall, which, when he had tasted, he refused to drink. They then stripped off his cloaths, and proceeded to the business of execution, by fastening him on the cross. But while they were piercing his hands and his feet with nails, instead of crying out from the sharpness of the pain, he calmly, though fervently, prayed

for them, and for all those who had any hand in his death; beseeching the Almighty to forgive them, and excusing them himself by the only circumstance that could alleviate their guilt; namely, their ignorance. *Father (said the compassionate Redeemer of mankind) forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

But now behold the appointed soldiers dig the hole in which the cross is to be erected!—The cross is placed in the ground, and the Blessed Jesus fastened on the bed of sorrows.—He is nailed to it—His nerves crack—His blood distils—He hangs upon his wounds naked, a spectacle to heaven and earth. And, to stain his innocence in the eyes of the multitude, and to put him to the greater shame, they crucified him between two common malefactors.

It was usual for the crimes committed by offenders to be distinctly written and placed over their heads on the cross. In conformity to this custom, Pilate ordered an inscription to be placed over the head of Jesus, and to be written in the three following languages, namely, Hebrew, Greek and Latin. This was accordingly done, and the inscription was, in itself, identically as follows:

JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

But when the chief priests and elders had read this title, they were greatly displeased: because, as it represented the crime for which Jesus was condemned, it insinuated that he had been acknowledged for the Messiah. Besides, being placed over the head of one who was dying by the most infamous punishment, it implied that all who attempted to deliver the Jews should perish in the same manner. The faith and hope of the nation, therefore, being thus publicly ridiculed, it is no wonder that the priests thought themselves highly affronted; and accordingly came to Pilate, begging that the writing might be altered. But as he had intended the affront in revenge for their forcing him to crucify Jesus, contrary both to his judgment and inclination, he refused to grant their request. *What I have written (said he) I have written.*

When the soldiers had nailed the Blessed Jesus to the cross, and fixed it upright in the ground, they divided his garments among them. But his coat, or vesture, being without seam, woven from the top throughout, they agreed not to rend it, but to cast lots for it, by which was fulfilled the prediction of the prophet concerning the death and sufferings of the Messiah. *They parted my garments among them, and for my vesture did they cast lots.* A sufficient indication that every circumstance attending the death and sufferings of the Blessed Jesus was long before determined in the court of heaven; and accordingly

† The word *Golgotha*, in the Syriac language, signifies the same that *Calvary* does in Latin, and was so called, either because the form of the mount did somewhat resemble a man's skull, or else, because, from its being the common place of execution, a great number of men's skulls were

usually to be seen there. It was a small eminency, or hill, upon the greater mount of Moriah, and being appropriated for the execution of malefactors, was considered as an execrable and polluted place.



The
CRUCIFIXION.

dingly his being crucified between two malefactors was expressly foretold—and *he was numbered among the transgressors.*

The common people (whom the vile priests had incensed against the Blessed Jesus, by the malicious falsehoods they had spread concerning him, and which they pretended to found on the deposition of witnesses) seeing him hang in so infamous a manner upon the cross, and reading the inscription that was placed over his head, signified their indignation at him by sarcastical expressions, *Thou (said they) that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself: if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.*

But the common people were not the only persons who mocked and derided the Blessed Jesus, while he was suffering to obtain the remission of sins for all mankind. The rulers, who now imagined they had effectually destroyed his pretensions to the character of the Messiah, joined the populace, in ridiculing him, and with a meanness of soul, which many infamous wretches would have scorned, mocked him, even while he was struggling with the agonies of death. They scoffed at the miracles by which he demonstrated himself to be the Messiah, and promised to believe in him, on condition of his proving his pretensions, by descending from the cross. *He saved others (said they) himself he cannot save; if he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.*

The soldiers also joined in the general scene of mockery, *If thou be the king of the Jews (said they) save thyself.* If thou art the great Messiah so long expected by the Jews, descend from the cross by miracle, and deliver thyself from these excruciating torments.

With Our Blessed Lord were crucified two notorious malefactors, one on his right hand, and the other on his left. One of these reviled and mocked him in the same gross manner with the multitude, requiring him to give them (as they desired) a demonstration of his being the true Messiah, by rescuing both himself and them from the crosses whereon they were fixed. But the other malefactor reproved his companion for insulting the innocent, and (while himself was receiving the just reward of his crimes) for upbraiding a person who suffered undeservingly. Having said this, he looked upon Jesus with a noble reliance, and most wonderful faith, and humbly besought him to retain some remembrance of him, when he came into his kingdom; to which Our Lord returned him his most gracious promise of speedy felicity.

But let us (before we proceed any farther in the relation of this melancholy scene) attentively consider the singularity of the circumstances that attended it, as they point out to our view events absolutely astonishing. When we remember the perfect innocence of our great Redeemer, the uncommon love he bore to the children of men, and the many kind and benevolent offices he did for the sons and daughters of affliction: when we reflect on the esteem in which he was held all along by the common people, how cheer-

fully they followed him to the remotest corners of the country, nay, even into the desolate retreats of the wilderness, and with what pleasure they listened to his discourses, we cannot help being astonished to find them at the conclusion rushing all of a sudden into the opposite extremes, and every individual, as it were, combined to treat him with the most barbarous cruelty.

When Pilate asked the people if they desired to have Jesus released, his followers, though they were very numerous, and might have made a great appearance in his behalf, remained absolutely silent, as if they had been speechless, or infatuated. The Roman soldiers, notwithstanding their general had declared him innocent, insulted him in the most inhuman manner. The Scribes and Pharisees ridiculed him. The common people, who had received him with Hosannas, a few days before, mocked him as they passed by, and railed at him as a deceiver. Nay, the very thief on the cross reviled him.

The followers of the Blessed Jesus had attached themselves to him in expectation of being raised to great wealth and power in his kingdom, which they imagined would have been long before established. But seeing no appearance of what they had so long hoped for, they permitted him to be condemned, perhaps because they thought it would have obliged him to break the Roman yoke by miracle.

With respect to the soldiers, they were angry that any one should pretend to royalty in Judea, where Cæsar had established his authority. Hence they insulted Our Blessed Saviour with the title of *king*, and paid him, in mockery, the honours of a sovereign.

As for the common people, they seem to have lost their opinion of him, probably because he had not rescued himself when they condemned him. They began, therefore, to consider the story of his destroying the temple, and building it in three days, as a kind of blasphemy, because it required Divine power to execute such an undertaking.

The priests and scribes were filled with the most implacable and diabolical malice against him; because he had torn off their masks of hypocrisy, and shewn them to the people in their full colours. It is therefore no wonder that they ridiculed his miracles from whence he derived his reputation.

The thief also fancied that he must have delivered both himself and them, if he had been the Messiah; but as no such deliverance appeared, he upbraided him for making pretensions to that high character.

But now, serious reader, take one view of thy dying Saviour, breathing out his life upon the cross! Behold his unspotted flesh lacerated with stripes, by which thou art healed! See his hands extended and nailed to the cross; those benignant hands, which were incessantly stretched out to unloose the heavy burthens, and to impart blessings of every kind! Behold his feet rivetted to the accursed tree with nails! those feet which always went about doing good, and travelled far and near to spread the glad tidings of everlasting salvation! View his tender temples encircled

circled with a wreath of thorns, which shoot their keen afflicted points into his blessed head; that head which was ever meditating peace to poor lost and undone sinners, and spent many a wakeful night in ardent prayer, for their happiness! See him labouring in the agonies of death! Breathing out his soul into the hands of his Almighty Father, and praying for his cruel enemies! Was ever love like this! Was ever benevolence so finely displayed!

O my soul, put thou thy trust in that bleeding, that dying Saviour! Then, though the pestilence walketh in darkness, and the sickness destroyeth at noon day; though thousands fall besides thee, and ten thousands at thy right hand, thou needest not fear the approach of any evil! Either the destroying angels shall pass over thee, or dispense the corrections of a friend, not the scourges of an enemy, which, instead of hurting, will work for thy good. Then, though profaneness and infidelity, far more malignant evils, breathe their contagion, and taint multitudes around thee, thou shalt be safely hid in the hollow of his hand, and freed from every danger.

Come then, my soul, let us take sanctuary under that tree of life, the ignominious cross of thy bleeding Saviour: let us fly for safety to that city of refuge, opened in his bleeding wounds. These will prove a sacred hiding-place, not to be pierced by the flames of Divine wrath, or the fiery darts of temptation. His dying merits, his perfect obedience, will be *as rivers of water in a dry place, or as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.*

But particularly in that last tremendous day, when the heaven shall be rent asunder, and wrapped up like a scroll; and his Almighty arm shall arrest the sun in his career, and dash the structure of the universe to pieces; when the dead, both small and great, shall be gathered before the throne of his glory, and the fates of all mankind hang on the very point of a final irreversible decision: then, if thou hast faithfully trusted in him, and made his precepts thy constant directors, shalt thou be owned and defended by him. O! reader, may both thou that persecutest, and him who hath written this for thy soul's advantage, be covered, at that unutterably important juncture, by the wings of his redeeming love; then shall we behold all the horrid convulsions of expiring nature, with composure, with comfort! we shall then welcome the consummation of all things.

But see the sun, conscious of the suffering of his Maker, and as it were to hide his face from this detestable action of mortals, is wrapped in the pitchy mantle of chaotic darkness! This preternatural eclipse of the sun continued for three hours, to the great terror and astonishment of the people present at the execution of our dear Redeemer. And surely nothing could be more proper than this extraordinary alteration in the face of nature, while the sun of righteousness was withdrawing his beams, not only from the promised land, but from the whole world; for it was at once a miraculous testimony given by the Almighty himself to the innocence of his Son, and a proper emblem of the departure of him who was the delight of the world, at least

till his luminous rays, like the beams of the morning, shone out a-new with additional splendor, in the ministry of his apostles.

Nor was the darkness which now covered Judea, and the neighbouring countries, beginning about noon and continuing till Jesus expired, the effect of an ordinary eclipse of the sun. It is well known that these phenomena can only happen at the change of the moon; whereas the Jewish passover, at which time our dear Redeemer suffered, was always celebrated at the full. Besides, the total darkness of an eclipse of the sun never exceeds twelve or fifteen minutes, whereas this continued three full hours. Nothing, therefore, but the immediate hand of that Almighty Being, which placed the sun in the centre of the planetary system, could have produced this astonishing darkness. Nothing but Omnipotence, who first lighted this glorious luminary of heaven, could have deprived it of its cheering rays. Now, ye scoffers of Israel, whose blood ye have so earnestly desired, and wished it might fall upon you and your children, behold, all nature is dressed in the sable veil of sorrow, and, in a language that cannot be mistaken, mourns the departure of its Lord and Master; weeps for your crimes, and deprecates the vengeance of heaven upon your guilty heads! Happy for you that this suffering Jesus is compassion itself, and even, in the agonies of death, prays to his heavenly Father to avert from you the stroke of his justice!

This preternatural eclipse of the sun was considered as a miracle by the heathens themselves; and one of them cried out, *Either the world is at an end, or the God of nature suffers.* And well might he use the expression: for never, since this planetary system was called from its primitive chaos, was known such a deprivation of light in the glorious luminary of day. Indeed, when the Almighty punished Pharaoh, for refusing to let the children of Israel depart out of his land, the sable veil of darkness was for three days drawn over Egypt. But this darkness was confined to a part of this kingdom; whereas, this that happened at Our Saviour's crucifixion was universal.

When the darkness began, the disciples naturally considered it as a prelude to the deliverance of their master. For though the chief priests, elders, and people, had sarcastically desired him to descend from the accursed tree, his friends could not but be persuaded, that he who had delivered so many from incurable diseases, who had created limbs for the maimed, and eyes for the blind; who had given speech to the dumb, and called the dead from the chambers of the dust, might easily save himself, even from the cross.

When, therefore, his mother, his mother's sister, Mary Magdalene, and the beloved disciple John, (all of whom were dismal spectators of this unparelled tragedy) observed the veil of darkness begin to extend over the face of nature, they drew near to the foot of the cross, probably in expectation that the son of God was going to shake the frame of the universe, unloose himself from the cross, and take ample vengeance on his cruel and perfidious enemies.

The

The Blessed Jesus was now in the midst of his sufferings. Yet, when he saw his mother and her companions, their grief greatly affected his tender breast, but more especially the distress of his mother. The agonies of death, under which he was now labouring, could not prevent his expressing the most affectionate regard, both for her and for them. And therefore that she might have some consolation to support her under the greatness of her sorrows, he told her, the disciple whom he loved would, for the sake of that love, supply his place to her after he was taken away from them, even the place of a son: and therefore he desired her to consider him as such, and expect from him all the duties of a child. *Woman* (said he) *behold thy son!*

Nor was this remarkable token of filial affection towards his mother the only instance the dying Jesus gave of his sincere love to his friends and followers; the beloved disciple John had also a token of his high esteem. He singled him out as the only person among his friends to supply his place with regard to his mother. Accordingly, he desired him expressly to reverence her in the same manner as if she had been his own parent. A duty which the favourite disciple gladly undertook, carried her with him to his house, and maintained her from that hour to the day of her death, her husband Joseph, having, it seems, been dead some time.

Thus, in the midst of the heaviest sufferings that human nature ever sustained, the Blessed Jesus demonstrated a Divine strength of benevolence. Even at the time when his own distress was at the highest pitch, and nature was dressed in the robe of mourning for the sufferings of the Redeemer of mankind; his friends had so large a share of his concern, that their happiness interrupted the sharpness of his pains, and, for a short time, engrossed his thoughts.

But now the moment, when he should resign his soul into the hands of his heavenly Father, approached, and he repeated part, at least, of the twenty-second psalm, uttering, with a loud voice, these remarkable words, *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?* that is, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!* Or, as the words may be rendered, *My God, my God, how long a time hast thou forsaken me*!*

Some of the people who stood by, when they heard Our Blessed Saviour pronounce these words, misunderstood him; probably from their not hearing him distinctly, and concluded that he called for Elias. Upon which one of them filled a sponge with vinegar, put it on a reed, and gave him to drink; being desirous to keep him alive as long as possible, to see whether Elias would come to take him down from the cross. But as soon as Jesus had tasted the vinegar, he said, *it is finished.* That is, the work

of man's redemption is accomplished; that great work which the only begotten Son of God came into the world to perform, is finished. In speaking these words, he cried with an exceeding loud voice; after which he addressed his Almighty Father in these words: *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit:* having uttered which, he bowed his head, and yielded up the ghost.

But behold! at the very instant that the Blessed Jesus resigned his soul into the hands of his heavenly Father, the veil of the temple was miraculously rent, from the top to the bottom; the earth trembled, from its very foundations, the flinty rocks burst asunder, and the sepulchres hewn in them were opened; and many bodies of saints deposited there awakened after his resurrection, from the sleep of death, left the gloomy chambers of the tomb, went into the city of Jerusalem, and appeared unto many.

And as the rending the veil of the temple intimated, that the entrance into the holy place, the type of heaven, was now laid open to all nations; so the resurrection of a number of saints from the dead demonstrated, that the power of death, and the grave, was broken; the sting was taken from death, and the victory wrested from the grave. In short, our dear Redeemer's conquests over the enemies of mankind were shewn to be compleat; and an earnest was given of the general resurrection of the dead.

Nor did the remarkable particulars which attended that awful period, when Jesus gave up the ghost, affect the natives of Judea only. The Roman centurion, who was placed near the cross to prevent disorders of any kind, glorified the Almighty, and cried out, *Truly this man was the Son of God!*

The people had been very desirous of having him crucified; but when they saw the face of the creation wrapped in the gloomy mantle of darkness during his crucifixion, and found his death accompanied with an earthquake, as if nature had been in an agony when he died, they rightly interpreted these prodigies to be so many testimonies of his innocence: and their passions, which had been inflamed and exasperated against him, became quite calm, or rather exerted in his favour. Some were angry with themselves for having neglected the opportunity the governor gave them of saving his life. Some were stung with remorse for having been active in procuring Pilate to condemn him, and even offering the most bitter insults while he laboured under the most cruel sufferings. And others were deeply affected at beholding the pains he suffered, which were undeservedly severe.

These various passions, being visibly painted in their countenances, afforded a melancholy spectacle: the whole multitude returned from the cruel execution with their eyes fixed on the earth, pensive

* It is the opinion of some that Our Blessed Saviour repeated the whole Psalm; it being the custom of the Jews, in making quotations, to mention only the first words of the Psalm or section, which they cite. If so, as this Psalm contains the most remarkable particular of our dear Redeemer's passion, being, as it were, a summary of all the prophecies relative to that subject, by repeating it on the

cross, the Blessed Jesus signified that he was now accomplishing the things that were predicted concerning the Messiah. And as this Psalm is composed in the form of a prayer, by pronouncing it, at this time, he also claimed of his Father the performance of all the promises he had made, whether to him, or to his people, the chief of which are recorded in the latter part of the Psalm.

penfive and silent: their hearts were ready to burst with grief, they groaned within themselves, and, as they walked, smote themselves on their breasts. *And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned.* John xxiii. 48. The grief they now felt for the Blessed Jesus arose from a very different principle to that which had occasioned their former rage against him. The latter was entirely owing to the artful insinuations of their priests; whereas their grief was genuine, and the natural feeling of their own hearts, greatly affected with the truth and innocence of him,

who was the object of their commiseration. And as flattery had no share in their mourning, so the expressions of their sorrow were such as distinguished the real sentiments and feelings of their hearts.

Thus was demonstrated, by many awful tokens, the truth, the divinity, and the power of Our Redeemer's mission. And thus were the blind and deluded Jews struck with horror at what they had beheld, being fully convinced, that the person they had cruelly put to death was no other than the Son of God—the promised Messiah—the Saviour of the world.

C H A P. XIV.

Our Blessed Lord is treated with indignity after his crucifixion. Joseph of Arimathea begs his body of Pilate, in order for interment. Pilate complies with his request, upon which Joseph, assisted by Nicodemus, takes away the body, and deposits it in a sepulchre which he had made for himself. The sepulchre is guarded by a body of Roman soldiers. Our Saviour's resurrection notified by angels, and testified by Mary Magdalene, but not believed. Our Lord appeareth to Mary. The soldiers appointed to guard the door of the sepulchre, being frightened at the appearance of an angel, who rolls away the stone that was placed against it, fly to Jerusalem. They relate the particulars of what they had seen to the heads of the Sanhedrim, who bribe them to give it out that Our Lord's body was stolen away by his disciples while themselves were asleep. Our Lord appears to two of his disciples as they are on their way to Emmaus, with whom he converses for some time, and then disappears. The two disciples go to Jerusalem, and report what had passed to the rest of their companions, some of whom are doubtful of the truth of their relation. While they are in debate together, Our Saviour suddenly appears among them, removes their doubts, chastises them for their incredulity, and gives them several important instructions relative to their future conduct. He again appears to his apostles, and convinces Thomas (who happened to be absent at the time of his former appearance) of the reality of his resurrection. Our Lord appears to Peter, and others, as they are fishing, and performs a miracle; after which he particularly converses with Peter. He appears to his apostles for the last time, and after some conversation, and bestowing on them his benediction, visibly ascend into heaven.

THE day on which Our Blessed Lord suffered was the eve, or preparation for the Paschal Festival, which, that year, happened to fall on the Jewish sabbath-day, and was, therefore, a feast and sabbath together. That so great and solemn a day might not be prophaned† by the suspension of the bodies on the crosses, the rulers of the Jews went to Pilate, requesting of him that their legs might be broken to hasten their deaths, and that their bodies might be taken down. Pilate readily gave his consent, upon which they returned to the place of execution,

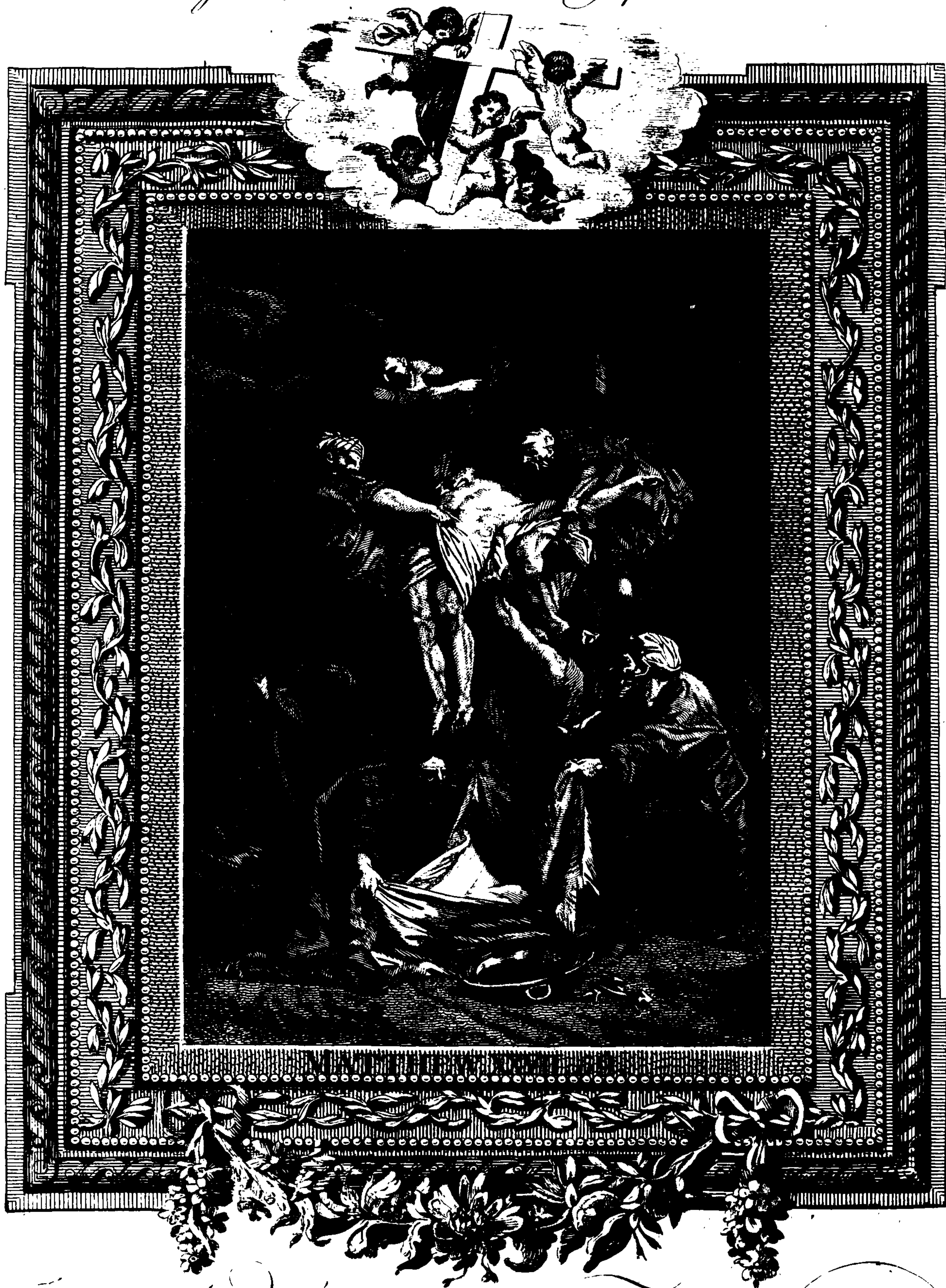
and immediately caused the first ceremony to be performed on the two thieves: But, when the soldiers came to Jesus, and found him already dead, instead of breaking his legs, one of them pierced his side with a spear, from which issued out a great quantity of blood and water.

This wound was of the greatest importance to mankind, as it abundantly demonstrated the truth of Our Saviour's death, and consequently prevented any objection being made by those who were enemies to the Gospel dispensation. The Evangelist adds, that the legs of Our Great Redeemer

† The Jews had a strict injunction in their law, that the bodies of those who were executed should not hang all night, but by all means be buried the same day, Deut. xxi. 22, 23. But the Romans were accustomed to do otherwise: they suffered the bodies to hang on the cross some time after they were dead, and, in some cases, a considerable time longer. It is probable the rulers of the Jews would have left the Romans to follow their own custom at this time, had it not been for the near approach of their passover, the festivity attending

which they thought might be damped by so melancholy a sight. On this account it was that they petitioned Pilate to have them removed; and the reason why. Pilate might be rather induced to grant their request was, that the Romans themselves had such respect for the feast-days of their emperors, that if any executions happened at those particular periods, they always took down their bodies, and delivered them to their friends.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



*Joseph of Arimathea taking our **BLESSED SAVIOUR**
from the **CROSS** after his Crucifixion.*

deemer were not broken, but his side pierced, that two particular prophecies might be fulfilled. *A bone of him shall not be broken, and they shall look on him whom they have pierced.*

Among the disciples of Our Lord was one named Joseph, a man of great wealth and honour, born in Arimathea, and not improbably one of the council of the Sanhedrim, but who stood in some fear of them while Our Saviour was alive. After his death, however, he took courage, and going to Pilate, begged that he might take away the body of his Great Master, well knowing that if such a grant was not obtained, it would be ignominiously cast away with the two criminals that had suffered with him.

Pilate was greatly surprized at the request of Joseph, thinking it highly improbable that Our Lord should be dead in so short a time. He had, indeed, given orders for the soldiers to break the legs of the crucified persons, but he knew it was common for them to live many hours after that operation was performed; for though the pain they felt must be exquisite to the last degree, yet, as the vital parts remained untouched, life would continue some time in the miserable body. Pilate, therefore, called the centurion to know the truth of what Joseph had told him; and being convinced from his answer that Jesus had been dead some time, he readily complied with his request.

In consequence of this Joseph immediately repaired to Mount Calvary, and with the assistance of Nicodemus*, (another private disciple of our Lord's) took the body from the cross. Nicodemus had been in such fear of the Sanhedrim, and therefore was so cautious of being seen to visit Jesus, that he always went to him by night. But in paying the last duties to his Master, he did not make use of any measures to conceal his affection for him. He shewed a courage and respect far superior to any of the apostles, not only assisting Joseph in taking the body of Jesus from the cross, but likewise bringing with him spices and various perfumes properly to prepare it for interment.

Not far from the place of execution was a garden belonging to Joseph, in which he had a short time before hewn out of a rock a sepulchre for his own private interment. Having, therefore, embalmed our Saviour's body, and wound it up in clean linen cloths, they there interred it, and, with a large stone cut out of the rock for the purpose, closed the mouth of the sepulchre.

Here we must make a short digression to contemplate on the wonderful contents of this repository of the dead. He who cloaths himself with light as with a garment, and walks upon the wings of the wind, was pleased to wear the habiliments of mortality, and dwell among the prostrate dead! Who can repeat the wondrous truths too often? Who can dwell upon the en-

chanting theme too long? He who sets enthroned in glory, and diffuses bliss among all the heavenly host, was once a pale and bloody corpse and pressed the floor of this little sepulchre! O death! how great was thy triumph in that hour! never did thy gloomy realms contain such a prisoner before—Prisoner, did I say? No, he was more than Conqueror. He arose far more mighty than Sampson from a transient slumber; broke down the gates, and demolished the strong holds of those dark dominions. And this, O mortals, is your consolation and security. Jesus, sleeping in the chambers of the tomb, has brightened the dismal mansion, and left an inviting odour in those beds of dust. The dying Jesus is your sure protection, your unquestionable passport, through the territories of the grave. Believe in him, and they shall prove an *highway to Sion*; shall transmit you safe to Paradise. Believe in him, and you shall be no losers, but unspeakable gainers by your dissolution. For hear what the oracle of heaven says, on this important point; *who so believeth in me shall never die*. Death shall no longer be inflicted as a punishment, but rather vouchsafed as a blessing. The exit is the end of their frailty, and their entrance upon perfection; their last groan is the prelude to life and immortality—But to return.

Mary Magdalene, and some other women of Galilee, who had watched their dear Redeemer in his last moments, and had accompanied his body to the sepulchre in Joseph's garden, observing that the funeral rites were performed in a hurry, and therefore not satisfactory to their wishes, agreed among themselves, as soon as the sabbath should be over, to return to the sepulchre, and embalm the body of their dead Saviour, by anointing and swathing him in the manner then common among the Jews. Accordingly, they returned to the city, and purchased spices of various sorts, with other articles, necessary for that purpose.

On the sabbath-day the rulers of the Jews went to Pilate and informed him, "That Our Lord (whom they called an impostor) having, in his life-time, made it his boast, that on the third day, he would rise again from the dead, they therefore requested of him, that he would order the sepulchre to be kept under a strong guard until that day was passed, lest his disciples should steal him away by night, and then give it out, that he was risen from the dead, which might prove a more dangerous seduction to the people, than any thing they had yet fallen into."

This request being thought reasonable by Pilate, he gave them leave to take as many soldiers as they pleased out of the cohort, which, at the feast, kept guard in the porticos of the temple.

The priests, having thus obtained a guard of Roman

* This is the same ruler of the Jews and Master of Israel (as the Evangelist calls him, John iii. 1, 10.) who, at Our Lord's first coming to Jerusalem, after he had entered upon his ministry, held a private conference with him, and for ever after was his disciple, though he made no open profes-

sion of it till after Our Lord's death. There is some reason to imagine that when the Jews came to be informed of his conduct, and that he had been in his heart one of Our Lord's disciples, they deposed him from the dignity of a senator, excommunicated him, and drove him out of Jerusalem.

Roman soldiers, men long accustomed to military duties, and therefore the most proper for watching the body, set out with them to the sepulchre; and to prevent them from combining with the disciples in carrying on any fraud, placed them at their post, and sealed the stone which was rolled at the door of the sepulchre. But what was designed to expose the mission and doctrine of Jesus as rank falsehood and vile imposture, proved in fact, the strongest confirmation of the truth and divinity of the same that could possibly be given; and placed, what the Jewish rulers wanted to refute (which was his resurrection from the dead) even beyond a doubt.

Early the next morning, even at break of day, Mary Magdalene, with Mary the mother of James, and the other women, who, on the Friday evening, had prepared spices and perfumes, went to the sepulchre to embalm again our Saviour's body, ignorant of the guard that was placed before the sepulchre. Their whole care and consultation on the way was, how they might get the large stone, that was at the entrance, removed. But, before they arrived at the place, an angel from heaven had rolled it away, and sat upon it; at the sight of whom (for his countenance was like lightning) and at the noise of an earthquake, which accompanied his appearance, the guards fell down like so many dead men. By this means when the women arrived at the place they had free entrance into the sepulchre, but were not a little astonished at looking in to find an angel, in a refulgent habit, sitting in the place where the body had lain. Frightened at so unexpected a sight, they were on the point of turning back, when the heavenly messenger, to banish their fears, told them, in a gentle accent, that he knew their errand. *Fear not* (said he) *for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified. He is not here; for he is risen as he said.* He then invited them to go down into the sepulchre, and view the place where the Son of God had lain; that is, to look on the linen clothes and the napkin that was about his head, and which he had left behind him when he arose from the dead.

The women, encouraged by the agreeable manner in which the angel had spoke, went down into the sepulchre, when, behold, there appeared before them another of the angelic choir. This Divine messenger gently chid them for seeking the living among the dead, and for not remembering the words which their great Master had himself told them with regard to his own resurrection. *Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen; remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.*

When the women had satisfied their curiosity by looking at the place where Our Lord had lain, and where nothing was to be found but the linen clothes which were wrapped round his body, and the napkin about his head, the angel, who first appeared to them, bade them go immediately and tell his disciples (but particularly Peter) the glad tidings of his resurrection from

the dead: that he was going before them to Galilee: and that they should there have the pleasure of seeing him.

In obedience to these commands, the women immediately left the sepulchre, and hastened to find out the apostles, which they had no sooner done, than Mary Magdalene related to them all they had heard and seen: but they, instead of believing them, looked upon all they said as nothing more than the product of a weak and frightened imagination. Out of curiosity, however, Peter and John ran to the sepulchre, and found all they had said to be true, the body being gone, the burying clothes lying on the ground, and the napkin, which was about Our Lord's head, folded and laid by itself. But notwithstanding this, such was their incredulity with respect to his being risen from the dead that they returned quietly home, not supposing any thing else but that some person or other had taken away the body.

Mary Magdalene, however, who had returned with Peter and John, stayed behind, and continued weeping at the door of the sepulchre. She could not yet understand what was meant by the angel's telling her Our Lord was risen from the dead, and therefore was exceeding anxious to find the body. Accordingly, going down into the sepulchre to examine it once more she saw two angels, the one sitting at the head, and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain. On beholding these heavenly messengers dressed in the robes of light, she was greatly terrified. But her fears were greatly mitigated by their asking her, in the most endearing accent, this question: *Woman, why weepest thou?* To which she replied, *Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.* On pronouncing these words she turned herself about, and saw Jesus standing near her; but the terror she was in, and the garments in which he now appeared, prevented her, for some time, from knowing him. Jesus repeated the same question before put to her by the angels: *Woman* (said he) *why weepest thou?* To which Mary (who now supposed him to be the gardener) answered, *Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.* But Our Blessed Lord, being willing to remove her anxiety, called her by her name, with his usual tone of voice. On this she immediately knew him, and, falling down, would have embraced his knee, according to that modesty and reverence with which the women of the east saluted the men, more especially those who were their superiors. But Jesus refused this compliment, telling her that he was not immediately going to ascend to his father. At the same time he said unto her, *Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God;* intimating that he had arisen from the dead, and should, in a short time, totally leave the world, and ascend into heaven.

The kindness of this message, sent by Our dear Redeemer to his disciples, will appear above all praise, if we remember their late behaviour. They had every one of them forsaken him in the greatest extremity. When he was scourged and

mocked

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR *appearing to* MARY MAGDALENE
after his Resurrection.

mocked by the Roman soldiers, derided by his countrymen, and spitefully treated by all, they hid themselves in some place of safety, and preferred their own security to the deliverance of their Master. Simon, a Cyrenian, was compelled, by the Roman soldiers, to ease him of his ponderous burthen. But, notwithstanding they had refused to assist their Master, during his sufferings for the sins of the world, he graciously, he freely forgave them: he assured them of their pardon, and called them even by the endearing name of *brethren*.

In the mean time the guards, who had been appointed to watch the sepulchre in which Our Lord was laid, and was frightened at the appearance of the angel that sat on the stone which had fastened up the mouth of it, fled into the city, and related all that had happened to the chief priests and rulers of the Sanhedrim. In consequence of this a general council was immediately summoned, in order to consult what was to be done in an affair of so important a nature. After various debates, they at length resolved to bribe the soldiers with a large sum of money, and thereby engage them to give it out among the people, that while themselves were asleep, the disciples of Jesus came, and stole him away; promising them withal, that, in case this their pretended neglect should come to the ears of the governor, they would take care to pacify him. The soldiers readily accepted this offer, took the money, and strictly obeyed the orders of their masters. And the report they propagated, in consequence of this, was current among the Jews for many years after.

In the afternoon of the same day on which Our Blessed Lord arose from the dead, two of his disciples left Jerusalem, in order to go to a village called Emmaus, about two miles distant. The concern they were in on account of the death of their great and beloved Master was sufficiently visible in their countenances; and as they pursued their journey talking to each other about the things that had lately happened among them concerning the life and doctrine, the sufferings and death of the holy Jesus, and of the report that was just spread of his being that very morning risen from the dead, Jesus himself appeared and joined company with them.

As Our Lord looked like a stranger, the two disciples had not the least suspicion that he was the Great Redeemer of the sons of men. But he soon entered into discourse with them, by enquiring what event had so closely engaged them in conversation, and why they appeared so sorrowful and dejected, as if they had met with some heavy disappointment?

One of them, whose name was Cleopas, being greatly surprized at this question, asked Our Lord if it were possible that he could be so great a stranger to the affairs of the world, as to have been at Jerusalem, and not to have heard the surprizing events that had happened there? Events that had astonished the whole city, and were then the general topics of conversation among all the inhabitants? Jesus answered, *What things? What surprizing events do you mean?*

Cleopas, thinking Our Lord a total stranger to

what had happened, proceeded to relate to him the particulars, which he communicated in words to this effect: "The events I mean are those which have happened concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who appeared as a great prophet and teacher sent from God; and accordingly was highly venerated among the people for the excellency of his doctrine, and the number, benefit, and greatness of his miracles. Our chief priests and elders, envying him as one who lessened their authority over the people, apprehended him, and found means to put him to death. But we firmly believed that he would have proved himself the Messiah, or Great Deliverer. And this persuasion we supported for a long time, nor were willing to abandon it, even when we saw him put to death. But it is now the third day since these things were done; and therefore begin to fear we were mistaken. This very morning, indeed, a circumstance happened which greatly surprized us, and we are exceeding anxious with regard to the event. Some women who had entertained the same hopes and expectations as ourselves, going early in the morning to pay their last duties to their Master, by embalming his body, returned in great haste to the city, and informed us, that they had been at the sepulchre, but were disappointed in not finding the body; and, to increase our surprize, they added, that they had seen two angels, who told them that Jesus was risen from the dead. This relation appeared at first to us as an idle tale, altogether incredible; but two of the company going immediately after to the sepulchre, found every thing exactly as the women had reported; so that we are in great doubt and perplexity with regard to this wonderful event."

The reply Our Lord made to his two disciples, after having heard this relation from Cleopas, was to the following effect: "Why are ye so very averse to believe what the prophets have, as it were, with one voice, predicted concerning the Messiah? Is it not clearly, and very expressly, foretold in all the prophetic writings, that it was appointed by the Almighty for the Messiah to suffer in this manner; and that, after sustaining the greatest indignities, reproach, and contempt, from the malice and perverseness of mankind, and even undergoing an ignominious and cruel death, he should be exalted to a glorious and eternal kingdom?" Having said this, he began at the writings of Moses, and explained to them, in order, all the principal passages, both in the books of that great legislator, and the writings of the other prophets, relative to his own sufferings, death, and glorious resurrection. This he did with such surprizing clearness and strength, that the two disciples (not yet suspecting who he was) were as much amazed to find him so well acquainted with all that Jesus did and suffered, as they at first wondered at his appearing to be totally ignorant of these transactions.

When the two disciples, accompanied by Our Blessed Lord, arrived at the village whither they were going, and Jesus seemed as if he would have passed on, and travelled farther, they, desirous

firous of his company, pressed him, in the strongest manner, to tarry with them that night, the day being then far spent. To this request the great Redeemer of mankind consented; and when they were sat down to supper, he took bread, gave thanks to God, brake it, and gave it to them, in the same manner he had done while he conversed with them upon earth before his death. This circumstance strongly engaged the attention of the two disciples, who, looking stedfastly at him, discovered that he was no less a person than their great and beloved Master. *And their eyes were opened, and they knew him.* But they had no time to express their astonishment and joy on the occasion; for he immediately *vanished out of their sight.*

As soon as the two disciples had recovered from their surprize, they immediately hastened to Jerusalem, where they found all the apostles (Thomas excepted) together, with several other disciples, discoursing about the resurrection of their Master; and, on their entering the room the disciples accosted them with these words: *The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon.* They had given little credit to the reports of the women, supposing they were occasioned more by imagination than reality. But when a person of Simon's capacity and gravity declared he had seen the Lord, the greater part of them began to think that he was really risen from the dead. And their belief was greatly confirmed by the arrival of the two disciples from Emmaus, who declared that Jesus had appeared to them on the road, and had discovered himself to be their Master, by breaking of bread.

While the two disciples from Emmaus were describing the manner of Our Lord's appearing to them, and using arguments to convince those who doubted of the truth of it, their great Master himself put an end to the debate by suddenly appearing in the midst of them, and saying, *Peace be unto you.* The appearance of Our Blessed Saviour greatly terrified the disciples, who imagined they saw a spirit; for having secured the doors of the house where they were assembled for fear of the Jews, and Jesus having entered without the knowledge of any person belonging to the house, it was natural for them to think that a spirit only could enter. The circumstance, therefore, of the doors being shut is very happily mentioned by the Evangelist, because it points out a clear reason why the disciples took their Master for a spirit, notwithstanding many of them were convinced, in their own minds, that he was really risen from the dead, and were that moment conversing about his resurrection.

But to dispel their fears and doubts, Our Blessed Lord spoke to them in the most endearing manner; having done which he shewed them his hands and his feet, and desired them to handle him, in order to convince themselves, by the united powers of their different senses, that it was he himself, and no spectre, or apparition. *Why are ye troubled, (said the benevolent Redeemer of mankind) and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.*

These infallible proofs sufficiently convinced

the disciples (at the time they saw them) of the truth of their Lord's resurrection, and they received them with rapture and exultation. But their joy and wonder had so great an effect upon their minds, that some of them (sensible of the great commotion they were in) suspended their belief till they had considered the matter more calmly. Jesus, therefore, knowing their thoughts, called for meat, and eat with them, in order to prove more fully the truth of his resurrection from the dead, and the reality of his presence with them on this occasion.

After Our Blessed Redeemer had given his apostles and disciples this farther demonstration of his having vanquished the power of death, and opened the tremendous portals of the grave, he gently chastised them for their unbelief, and then repeated his salutation, *Peace be unto you.* Having done this, he gave his apostles some instructions relative to their future conduct, and informed them with what power they should be invested, in order to propagate his Gospel, during their residence on earth; all which he expressed in words to this effect: "The same commission that my Father hath given unto me, I give unto you: go ye, therefore, into every part of the world, and preach the Gospel to all the children of men." Then breathing on them he said, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.* "Receive the Holy Ghost to direct and assist you in the execution of your commission. Who ever embraces your doctrine, and sincerely repents, ye shall remit his sins, and your sentence of absolution shall be ratified and confirmed in the courts of heaven. And who ever either obstinately rejects your doctrine, disobeys it, or behaves himself unworthy after he has embraced it, his sins shall not be forgiven him; but the censure ye shall pass upon him on earth shall be confirmed in heaven." Having said this, Our Blessed Lord disappeared, leaving his apostles and disciples to contemplate on the wonderful things they had both seen and heard.—And thus ended the first day of the week, which, in honour of Our Blessed Saviour's resurrection, has, ever since, among all Christians, been kept as the Sabbath.

Thus have we enumerated, in the most explicit manner, the transactions of that day on which the great Redeemer of mankind arose from the dead; a day highly to be remembered by the children of men, throughout all generations. A day, in which was fully compleated and displayed the conceptions lodged in the breast of infinite wisdom from all eternity! even those thoughts of love and mercy, on which the salvation of the world depended. Christians have therefore the highest reason to solemnize this day with gladness, each returning week, by ceasing from their labour, and giving up themselves to prayer, pious meditations, and other exercises of religion. The redemption of mankind which they weekly commemorate affords matter for eternal thought; it is a subject impossible to be equalled, and whose lustre neither length of time, nor frequent reviewing, can either tarnish or diminish. It resembles the sun, which we behold always the same

same glorious and luminous object; for the benefit we celebrate is, after so many ages, as fresh and beautiful as ever, and will always continue the same, flourishing in the memories of pious people, through the endless revolutions of eternity. Redemption is the brightest mirror by which we contemplate the goodness of the Almighty. Other gifts are only mites from the divine treasure; but redemption opens, I had almost said exhausts, all the stores of his grace. May it be constantly the favourite subject of our meditations, more delightful to our musing minds, than applause to the ambitious ear! May it be the darling theme of our discourse; sweeter to our tongues than the dropping of the honey comb to the taste! May it be our choicest comfort, through all the changes of this mortal life; and the reviving cordial, even in the last extremities of dissolution itself!

At the time Our Blessed Lord appeared before his apostles at Jerusalem after his resurrection, Thomas, otherwise called Didymus, was absent. When, therefore, he came to them they told him that they had seen the Lord, and repeated to him the words he had delivered in their hearing. But Thomas, who was naturally of a very incredulous disposition, would not believe them, saying, *Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.* As if he had said, "This event is of such great importance, that unless, to prevent all possibility of deception, I see him with my own eyes, and feel him with mine own hands, putting my fingers into the prints of the nails whereby he was fastened to the cross, and thrust my hand into his side which the soldier pierced with his spear, I will not believe that he is really and truly risen from the dead."

Eight days after this, when the apostles were met together in the same place, with the doors shut for fear of the Jews, and Thomas was with them, Jesus again appeared, and, standing in the midst of them, saluted them, as before, with the blessing of Peace. Having done this he turned himself to Thomas, and, knowing his unbelief, addressed him in words to this effect: "Thomas, since thou wilt not be contented to rely on the testimony of others, but must be convinced by the experience of thy own senses, behold the wounds in mine hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and doubt no longer of the reality of my resurrection."

Thomas immediately obeyed the kind invitation of his dear Master, and being fully satisfied, according to his own desire, he cried out, *My Lord and my God.* As if he had said, "I am now abundantly convinced: thou art, indeed, my Lord, the very same that was crucified; and I acknowledge thy Almighty power in having triumphed over death, and most sincerely worship thee as my God."

To this the Blessed Jesus replied, *Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.* "Because thou hast both seen and felt me, thou hast believed that I am really risen from the dead. But blessed are those, who, without such evi-

dence of the senses, shall, upon credible testimony, be willing to believe and embrace a doctrine; which tends so much to the glory of God, and the salvation of the sons of men."—St. John adds, that the Blessed Jesus appeared, on several other occasions, to his disciples after his resurrection; and by many clear and infallible proofs, not mentioned by him, fully convinced them that he was alive after his resurrection. He observes, at the same time, that those which he has mentioned are abundantly sufficient to induce men to believe that Jesus was the Son of God, the great Messiah so often foretold by the antient prophets; and that by means of that belief they may obtain everlasting life in the happy regions of the heavenly Canaan.

Our Blessed Saviour having first by the angels, and afterwards in person, ordered his disciples to repair into Galilee, they accordingly, as soon as the feast was over, left Jerusalem, and returned to the different provinces from whence they came. They had not been long there when Peter, with several others of the apostles, returned to their old trade of fishing, in the lake, or sea of Tiberias. After toiling all night without success, early in the morning they saw Jesus standing on the shore, but did not then know him to be their Master. He, however, called to them, and asked if they had taken any fish: to which they answered, they had caught nothing. Jesus then said unto them, *Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find.* The disciples, imagining that he might be acquainted with the places proper for fishing, did as he had directed them, and inclosed in their net such a multitude of fishes, that they were not able to draw it into the boat, but were forced to drag it after them in the water towards the shore.

This remarkable success, after toiling all night to no purpose, caused various conjectures among them with regard to the stranger on shore, who had given them such happy advice. The greater part of the apostles said they could not imagine who he was; but two of them were persuaded that he was no other than their great and beloved Master. John was fully convinced of his being the Lord, and accordingly told his thoughts to Simon Peter, who, making no doubt of it, immediately girt on his fisher's coat, and leaped into the sea, in order to get ashore sooner than the boat could be brought to land, dragging after it a net full of large fishes.

When all the apostles had got on shore they were greatly surprized to find a fire kindled, on which was a fish, and near it some bread. But these not being sufficient for them all, Jesus bade them bring some of the fish they had just caught, which having done, he divided the bread and fish among them, and they sat down to refresh themselves in the presence of their beloved Master. Thus did the Blessed Jesus prove again to his disciples the reality of his resurrection, not only by delivering food to them with his own hands, but by working a miracle like that which, at the beginning of his ministry, had made such an impression on their minds as to induce them to become his followers. This was the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples after that he was risen from the dead.

When

When the disciples had sufficiently refreshed themselves, Jesus entered into conversation with Peter. To whom he said, *I love thee more than these?* Art thou more zealous and affectionate towards me, than the rest of my disciples? To which Peter answered, *Yea, Lord: thou knowest that I love thee.* Jesus repeated the same question twice, and received the same answer from Peter; upon which he said unto him, *Feed my lambs, Feed my sheep.* "Express thou thy love towards me, by the care of my flock committed to thy charge. Shew your love to me, by publishing the great salvation I have accomplished; and feeding the souls of faithful believers with that food which never perishes, but endureth for ever and ever." Our Lord then farther said unto Peter: *Verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not.* By these last words Jesus signified that Peter's death was to be by crucifixion, which he should suffer for the glory of God, and the testimony of the truth of the Christian religion.

When Peter was informed by Our Lord of what was to be his own fate, he was desirous of knowing that of his fellow-disciple John, and therefore said unto Jesus, *Lord, and what shall this man do?* But Jesus, instead of gratifying his curiosity, required him to attend to his own concerns, and as he was to resemble him in the manner of his death, so to endeavour to imitate him in his deportment under it.

After this Our Lord having appointed a solemn meeting of as many of his disciples as could conveniently be got together, and named a certain mountain in Galilee (probably that on which he was transfigured) for the purpose, they assembled at the time appointed. They did not wait long before the Blessed Jesus appeared to them, on which they were seized with rapture, their hearts overflowed with gladness, they approached their kind and benevolent Master, and worshipped him. Here Our Blessed Lord told his apostles, that all power, both in heaven and earth was given to him: commanded them to instruct all nations, and to baptize *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*; and to press them to be diligent in enforcing his precepts among their hearers, he promised them his protection and assistance in the arduous task they were about to undertake.

Forty days was the time pre-ordained for Our Lord's continuance upon earth after his resurrection. These days being now almost expired, the apostles (according as they had been ordered) with some of their select friends, returned to Jerusalem, and there assembled themselves in a private place, as they had always done after the crucifixion of their Master. Here Our Blessed Lord appeared to them for the last time; and after instructing them in many particulars concerning the kingdom of God, and the manner in which they were to behave themselves in propagating the doctrine of the Gospel, he put them in mind that, during his abode with them in Galilee, he had often told them, that all

things written in the law, the prophets, and the psalms, concerning him, were to be exactly accomplished. At the same time, *he opened their understandings*; that is, he removed their prejudices by the operation of his spirit, cleared their doubts, improved their memories, strengthened their judgments, and enabled them to discern the true meaning of the scriptures. He then reminded them that both Moses and the prophets had foretold that the Messiah was to suffer in the very same manner he had suffered; that he was to rise from the dead on the third day as he had done; and that repentance and remission of sins was to be preached, in the Messiah's name, among all nations, beginning with the Jews. He told them, that they were to testify unto the world the exact accomplishment in him of all things foretold concerning the Messiah; and closed his instructions to them by giving them a particular charge that they should not depart from Jerusalem, until they had received that miraculous effusion of the Holy Ghost, which he had promised, and would shortly send down upon them. He likewise gave them to understand, that, after the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, they would have juster notions of those matters, and be sufficiently enabled to be the authentic witnesses of his life and actions throughout the world.

After Our Blessed Lord had thus fortified his apostles for the important work they were going to undertake, he led them out of the city to that part of the mount of Olives, which was nearest to Bethany. On their arrival there, he gave them some farther instructions relative to the measures they were to follow in order to propagate his gospel, after which he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was doing this, and his apostles were placed in an adoring posture, he was parted from them in the midst of the day, being gradually taken up, in a shining cloud, and triumphantly carried into heaven, where he now sitteth at the right hand of God his Father, *to whom be honour, glory and power, for ever and ever. Amen.*

Hosanna to the prince of light,
That cloath'd himself in clay;
Extend the iron gates of death,
And tore the bars away.

Death is no more the king of dread,
Since Christ Our Lord arose;
He took the tyrant's sting away,
And spoil'd our hellish foes.

See how the Conqu'ror mounts aloft,
And to his Father flies,
With scars of honour in his flesh,
And triumph in his eyes.

There our exalted Saviour reigns,
And scatters blessings down;
Our Jesus fills the right-hand seat
Of the celestial throne.

In this illustrious manner did the Great Redeemer of mankind depart, after having finished the grand work about which he was sent into
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Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR'S ASCENSION *up to* HEAVEN.

the world: a work, which angels, with joy, described was to happen, and which, through all eternity to come, at periods the most immensely distant from the time of its execution, be looked back upon with inexpressible delight by every inhabitant of heaven: for, though the minute affairs of time may vanish together, and be lost, when they are removed far back by the endless progression of duration, yet this object is such, that no distance, however great, can lessen. The kingdom of heaven is erected on the incarnation and sufferings of the Son of God, and therefore no mortal whatever can forget the foundation on which his happiness stands established; nor will any fail of obtaining a seat in those mansions, provided he preserves a proper subjection to him, who reigneth for ever and ever, and whose favour is better than life itself.

It may not be improper, in this place, to admit a few reflections on the life of the Blessed Jesus—a life the greatest and best that was ever led by man, or was ever the subject of any history, since the universe was called from its original chaos by the powerful word of the Almighty.

The human character of the Blessed Jesus is entirely different from that of all other men whatever; for whereas they have selfish passions deeply rooted in their breasts, and are influenced by them in almost every thing they do, Jesus was so entirely free from them, that the most severe scrutiny cannot furnish one single action, in the whole course of his life, wherein he consulted his own interest only. No; he was influenced by very different motives; the happiness and eternal welfare of sinners regulated his conduct; and while others followed their respective occupations, Jesus had no other business than that of promoting the happiness of the sons of men. Nor did he wait till he was solicited to extend his benevolent hand to the distressed: *he went about doing good*, and always accounted it *more blessed to give than to receive*; resembling God rather than man. He went about doing good: benevolence was the very life of his soul: he not only did good to objects presented to him for relief, but he industriously sought them out, in order to extend his compassionate assistance.

It is common for persons of the most exalted faculties to be elated with success and applause, or dejected by censure and disappointments: but the Blessed Jesus was not elated by the one, nor depressed by the other. He was never more courageous, than when he met with the greatest opposition and cruel treatment; nor more humble than when the sons of men worshipped at his feet.

He came into the world inspired with the grandest purpose that ever was formed, that of saving from eternal perdition, not a single nation, but the whole world; and in the execution of it, went through the longest and heaviest train of labours that ever was sustained, with a constancy and resolution, on which no disadvantageous impression could be made by any accident whatever. Calumny, threatnings, bad success, with many other evils constantly attending him, served only to quicken his endeavours in this glorious enterprise, which he unweariedly pursued even till he finished it by his death.

The generality of mankind are prone to retaliate injuries received, and all seem to take a satisfaction in complaining of the cruelties of those who oppress them; whereas the whole of Christ's labours breathed nothing but meekness, patience, and forgiveness, even to his bitterest enemies; and in the midst of the most excruciating torments. The words, *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do*, uttered by him when his enemies were nailing him to the cross, fitly express the temper which he maintained through the whole course of his life, even when assaulted by the heaviest provocations. He was destined to sufferings here below, in order that he might raise his people to honour, glory, and immortality, in the realms of bliss above; and therefore patiently, yea joyfully, submitted to all that the malice of earth and hell could inflict. He was vilified, that we might be honoured: he died, that we might live, for ever and ever.

To conclude: the greatest and best men have discovered the degeneracy and corruption of human nature, and shewn themselves to have been nothing more than men: but it was otherwise with Jesus. He was superior to all the men that ever lived, both with regard to the purity of his manners, and the perfection of his virtues. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners.

Whether we consider him as a teacher, or as a man, *he did no sin; neither was guile found in his mouth*. His whole life was perfectly free from spot or weakness; at the same time it was remarkable for the greatest and extensive exercises of virtue. But never to have committed the least sin, in word or in deed, never to have uttered any sentiment that could be censured, upon the various topics of religion and morality, which were the daily subjects of his discourses, and that through the course of a life filled with action, and led under the observation of many enemies, who had always access to converse with him, and who often came to find fault, is a pitch of perfection evidently above the reach of human nature; and consequently he who possessed it must have been Divine.

Such was the person who is the subject of the evangelical history. If the reader, by reviewing his life, doctrine and miracles, as they are here represented to him, united in one series, has a clearer idea of these things than before, or observes a beauty in his actions thus linked together, which taken separately do not appear so fully; if he feels himself touched by the character of Jesus in general, or with any of his sermons and actions in particular, thus simply delineated in writing, whose principal charms are the beauties of truth: above all, if his dying so generously for men strikes him with admiration, or fills him with joy in the prospect of that pardon which is thereby purchased for the world: let him seriously consider with himself what improvement he ought to make of the Divine goodness.

Jesus, by his death, hath set open the gates of immortality to the sons of men; and by his word, spirit and example, graciously offers to make them meet for the glorious rewards in the

kingdom of the heavenly Canaan, and to conduct them into the inheritance of the saints in light. Let us, therefore, remember, that being born under the dispensation of his gospel, we have, from our earliest years, enjoyed the best means of securing to ourselves an interest in that favour of God, which is life; and that loving-kindness, which is better than life.

We have been called to aspire after an exaltation to the felicity of the heavenly mansions exhibited to mortal eyes in the man Jesus Christ, to fire us with the noblest ambition. His Gospel teaches us that we are made for eternity; and that our present life is to our future existence, as infancy is to manhood. But as in the former, many things are to be learned, many hardships to be endured, many habits to be acquired, and that by a course of exercises, which in themselves though painful, and possibly useless to the child, yet are necessary to fit him for the business and enjoyments of manhood. So while we remain in this infancy of human life, things are to be learned, hardships to be endured, and habits to be acquired, by a laborious discipline, which, however painful, must be undergone, because necessary to fit us for the employments and pleasures of our riper existence, in the realms above, always remembering that whatever our trials may be, in this world, if we ask for God's assistance, he has promised to give it. Enflamed, therefore, with the love of immortality and its joys, let us submit ourselves to our heavenly teacher, and learn of him those graces, which alone can render life pleasant, death desirable, and fill eternity with ecstatic joys.

We cannot close the solemn scene of the Life of Our dear Lord and Saviour with greater propriety than by making a few observations on the nature of his religion, and considering the great benefits which will infallibly result to all, who shall, by faith, receive and embrace his holy doctrine.

The religion of Christ is the perfection of human nature, and the foundation of uniform, exalted pleasure: of public order, and private happiness. Christianity is the most excellent and the most useful institution, having *the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come*. It is the voice of reason; it is also the language of scripture: *the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace*: And Our Blessed Saviour himself assures us, that his precepts are easy, and the burthen of his religion light.

The Christian religion comprehends all we ought to believe, and all we ought to practise: its positive rights are few, and perfectly intelligible to every capacity; and the whole is manifestly adapted to establish in us a proper sense of the great obligations we lay under both to God and Christ.

The Gospel places religion not in obtruse speculation, and metaphysical subtleties; not in outward shew, and tedious ceremony; not in superstitious austerities and enthusiastic visions; but in purity of heart and holiness of life. The sum of our duty (according to Our Great Master him-

self) consists in the *love of God, and of our neighbour*. According to St. Paul, in denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts; and in living soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. According to St. James, in visiting the fatherless and widow in affliction, and in keeping ourselves unspotted in the world. This is the constant strain and tenor of the gospel. This it inculcates most earnestly, and on this it lays the greatest stress.

It may be asked if the Christian religion is only a view of the law of nature, or merely a refined system of morality? To which we answer, that it is a great deal more than either. It is an act of grace, a stupendous plan of Providence, for the recovery of mankind from a state of degradation and ruin, to the favour of the Almighty, and to the hopes of a happy immortality through a Mediator.

Under this dispensation, true religion consists in a *repentance towards God, and in faith in the Lord Jesus Christ*, as the person appointed by the supreme authority of heaven and earth, to reconcile apostate man to his offended Creator. And what hardship is there in all this? Surely none. Nay, the practice of religion is much easier than the servitude of sin.

It certainly must be allowed by all that our rational powers are impaired, and the soul weakened by sin. The animal passions are strong, and apt to oppose the dictates of the Spirit of God: objects of sense make powerful impressions on the mind. We are, in every situation, surrounded with many snares and temptations. In such a disordered state of things, to maintain an undeviating path of duty, cannot be effected by poor weak man. There are, however, generous aids afforded us to persevere in the ways of the Lord.

The gracious Author of nature has planted in the human breast a quick sense of good and evil; a faculty which strongly dictates right and wrong: and though by the strength of appetite and warmth of passion, men are often hurried into immoral practices, yet in the beginning, especially when there has been the advantage of a good education, it is usually with reluctance and opposition of mind. What inward struggles precede! What bitter pangs attend their sinful excesses! What guilty blushes and uneasy fears! What frightful prospects and pale reviews! *Terrors are upon them, and a fire not blown consumeth them. To make a mock at sin, and to commit iniquity without remorse, requires great length of time, and much painful labour; more labour than is requisite to attain that habitual goodness which is the glory of the man, the ornament of the Christian, and the chief of his happiness.*

The soul can no more be reconciled to acts of wickedness and injustice, than the body to excess, but by suffering many bitter pains, and cruel attacks.

The mouth of conscience may, indeed, be stopped for a time, by false principles: its secret whispers may be drowned by the noise of company, and stifled by the entertainments of sense; but this principle of conscience is so deeply rooted in human nature, and, at the same time, her voice is so clear and strong, that the sinners
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arts will be unable to lull her into a lasting security.

When the hour of calamity arrives; when sickness seizeth, and death approaches the sinner, conscience now constrains him to listen to her accusations, and will not suffer the temples of his head to take any rest. *There is no peace to the wicked*; the foundations of peace are subverted, they are at utter enmity with their reason, with their conscience, and with their God.

Not so is the case of true religion. For when religion, pure and genuine, forms the tempers, and governs the life; conscience applauds, and peace takes his residence in the breast. The soul is in its proper state. There is order and regularity both in the faculties and actions. Conscious of its own integrity, and secure of divine approbation, the soul enjoys a calmness not to be described. But why do we call this happy frame calmness only? It is far more than mere calmness. The air may be calm, and the day overcast with thick mists and clouds. The pious and virtuous mind resembles a serene day, enlightened and enlivened with the brightest rays of the sun. Though all without may be clouds and darkness, there is light in the heart of a pious man. *He is satisfied from himself; and is filled with peace and joy in believing.* In the concluding scene (the awful moment of dissolution) all is peaceful and serene. The immortal part quits its tenement of clay, with the well grounded hopes of ascending to happiness and glory.

Nor does the gospel enjoin any duty but what is fit and reasonable. It calls upon all its professors to practise reverence, submission, and gratitude to God; justice, truth, and universal benevolence to men: and to maintain the government of our own minds. And what has any one to object against this? From the least to the greatest commandment of our dear Redeemer, there is not one which impartial reason can find fault with. *His law is perfect; his precepts are true and righteous, altogether.* Not even those excepted, which require us to love our enemies, to deny ourselves, and to take up our cross. To forgive an injury is more generous and manly than to revenge it: to controul a licentious appetite than to indulge it: to suffer poverty, reproach, and even death itself, in the sacred cause of truth and integrity, is much wiser and better, than, by base compliances, to make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience.

Thus in a storm at sea, or a conflagration on the land, a man with pleasure abandons his lumber, to secure his jewels. Piety and virtue are the wisest and most reasonable things in the world; vice and wickedness the most irrational and absurd.

The all-wise Author of our being hath so framed our natures, and placed us in such relations, that there is nothing vicious, but what is injurious; nothing virtuous but what is advantageous to our present interest, both with respect to body and mind. Meekness and humility, patience and universal charity, and grace, give a joy *unknown to transgressors.*

The divine virtues of truth and equity are the

only bands of friendship, the only supports of society. Temperance and sobriety are the best preservatives of health and strength: but sin and debauchery impair the body, consume the substance, reduce us to poverty, and form the direct path to an immature and untimely death.

To render our duty easy, we have the example, as well as the commands, of the blessed Jesus. The masters of morality among the heathens gave excellent rules for the regulation of mens manners; but they wanted either the honesty, or the courage to try their own arguments upon themselves. It was a strong presumption that the yoke of the Scribes and Pharisees was grievous, when they laid *heavy burdens upon mens shoulders*, which they themselves refused to touch with one of their fingers. Not thus our great law-giver, Jesus Christ the righteous. His behaviour was in all respects, conformable to his doctrine. His devotion towards God, how sublime and ardent! benevolence towards men, how great and diffusive! He was in his life an exact pattern of innocence; for he *did no sin; neither was guile found in his mouth*. In the Son of God incarnate is exhibited the brightest, the fairest resemblance of the Father, that heaven and earth ever beheld, an example peculiarly persuasive, calculated to inspire resolution, and to animate us to use our utmost endeavours to imitate the divine pattern, the example of *the author and finisher of our faith, of him who loved us, and gave himself for us.* Our profession and character as Christians oblige us to make this example the model of our lives. Every motive of decency, gratitude, and interest, constrain us to tread the paths he trod before us.

We should also remember that our burden is easy; because God, who *knoweth whereof we are made, who considereth that we are but dust*, is ever ready to assist us. The heathens themselves had some notion of this assistance, though guided only by the glimmering lamp of reason. But what they looked upon as probable the Gospel clearly and strongly asserts. We there hear the apostle exhorting, *Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.* We there hear the blessed Jesus himself arguing in this convincing manner: *If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy spirit to them that ask him?*

We would not here be understood to mean, that the agency of the spirit is irresistible, and lays a necessitating bias on all the faculties and affections. Were this the case, precepts and prohibitions, promises and threatnings, would signify nothing; and duty and obligation would be words without a meaning. The spirit assisteth in a manner agreeable to the frame of human nature; not controuling the free use of reason, but by assisting the understanding, influencing the will, and moderating the affections. But though we may not be able to explain the mode of his operations, the scriptures warrant us to assert, that when men are renewed and prepared for heaven, it is *through sanctification of*

the spirit, and belief of the truth. How enlivening the thought! how encouraging the motive! We are not left to struggle alone with the difficulties which attend the practice of virtue, in the present imperfect state. The merciful Father of our spirit is ever near to help our infirmities, to enlighten the understanding, to strengthen good resolutions, and in concurrence with our own endeavors, to make us conquerors over all opposition. Faithful is he to his promises, and will not suffer the sincere and well disposed to be tempted above what they are able to bear. What can be desired more than this? To promote the happiness of his people, every thing is done that is requisite, his grace is all sufficient, his spirit is able to conduct us through this vale of tears, to never-fading bliss.

We should also remember, that the great doctrine of the Gospel, concerning the propitiatory mercy of God to all penitents, through Christ Jesus, greatly contributes to the consolation of Christians. Let it be granted, that the hope of pardon is essential to the religion of fallen creatures, and one of its first principles, yet, considering the doubts and suspicions which are apt to arise in a mind conscious of guilt, it is undoubtedly a great, and inestimable favour, to be relieved in this respect, by the interposition of Divine assistance. This is our happiness. We are fully assured, that upon our true repentance, we shall, *through the mediation of Christ, receive the full remission of sins*, and be restored to the same state and favour with our Maker, as if we had never transgressed his laws. Here the gospel triumphs. With these assurances it abounds. Upon this head the declaration of our blessed Saviour and his Apostles are so express and full, that every one who believes them, and knows himself to be a true penitent, must banish every doubt and fear, and rejoice with joy unspeakable. *Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* Matt. xi. 28. *All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men.* Matt. xii. 31. *Be it known unto you therefore men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses.* Acts xiii, 38, 39. What grace and favour is this! who can dwell upon the transporting theme too long! Now our way is plain before us, and the burden we are to bear is made comfortably easy. No sins are unpardonable, if repented and forsaken.

Consider this, all ye who have never yet regarded religion, but pursued a course of vice and sensuality all your lives long. Though your conduct has been base, to the last degree, your case is not desperate. Far from it. The God whom you have so highly offended commiserates your errors, is ever ready to extend his pardoning mercy to his most degenerate creatures, upon their faith and repentance, and *is in Christ Jesus reconciling the world to himself, not imputing unto penitent sinners their trespasses.* Let the wicked, therefore, forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. Isaiah. lv. 7.

Another particular, which renders the Christian religion delightful is, its leading us to the perfect, eternal life of heaven. It cannot be denied but that we may draw from the light of nature strong presumptions of a future state. The present existence does not look like an intire scene, but rather like the infancy of human nature, which is capable of arriving at a much higher degree of maturity; but whatever solid foundation the doctrine of a future state may have had, in nature and reason, certain it is, through the habitual neglect of reflection, and the force of irregular passions, this doctrine was, before the coming of Our Blessed Saviour, very much disfigured, and, in a great measure, lost, among the sons of men.

In the heathen world, a future state of rewards and punishments was a matter of mere speculation and uncertainty, sometimes hoped for, sometimes doubted of, and sometimes absolutely denied. The law of Moses, though of divine original, is chiefly enforced by promises of temporal blessings; and, even in the writings of the prophets, a future immortality is very sparingly mentioned, and obscurely represented, but the doctrine of our Saviour hath *brought life, and immortality to light*. In the gospel we have a distinct account of another world, attended with many engaging circumstances; about which the decisions of reason were dark and confused. We have the testimony of the author of our religion, who was raised from the dead, and who afterwards, in the presence of his disciples, ascended into heaven. In the New Testament it is expressly declared, that good men, *when absent from the body, are present with the Lord*. Here we are assured of the resurrection of the body in a glorious form, clothed with immortal vigour, suited to the active nature of the animating spirit, and assisting its most enlarged operations and incessant progress towards perfection. Here we are assured, that *the righteous shall go into life everlasting*, that they shall enter into the heavenly Canaan, where no ignorance shall cloud the understanding, no vice disturb the will. In these regions of perfection, nothing but love shall possess the soul; nothing but gratitude employ the tongue; there the righteous shall be united to an innumerable company of angels, and to the general assembly and church of the first born: there they shall see their exalted Redeemer, at the right hand of Omnipotence, and sit down with him on his throne; there they shall be admitted into the immediate presence of the supreme fountain of life and happiness, and, beholding his face, be changed into the same image, from glory to glory.

Here language—here imagination fails us! It requires the genius, the knowledge, the pen of an angel, to paint the happiness, the blissful scene of the New Jerusalem, which human eyes cannot behold, till this mortal body shall be purified from its corruption, and dressed in the robes of immortality: “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart to conceive, the joys which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

What is the heaven of the heathens, when compared

compared with the heaven of the Christians? The hope, the prospect of this, is sufficient to reconcile us to all the difficulties that may attend our progress, sweeten all our labours, alleviate every grief, and silence every murmur.

But why, says the libertine in the gaiety of his heart, should there be any difficulties, or restraint, at all? God hath made nothing in vain. The appetites he hath planted in the human breast are to be gratified. To deny or restrain them, is ignominious bondage; but to give full scope to every desire and passion of the heart, without check or controul, is true manly freedom.

In opposition to this loose and careless way of reasoning, let it be considered, that the liberty of a rational creature doth not consist in an entire exemption from all controul, but in following the dictates of reason, as the governing principle, and in keeping the various passions in due subordination. To follow the regular notion of those affections which the wise Creator hath implanted within us, is our duty: but as our natural desires, in this state of trial, are often irregular, we are bound to restrain their excesses, and not indulge them, but in a strict subserviency to the integrity and peace of our minds, and to the order and happiness of human society established in the world. Those who allow the supreme command to be usurped by sensual and brutal appetites, may *promise themselves liberties*, but are truly and absolutely the *servants of corruption*. To be vicious, is to be enslaved. We behold with pity those miserable objects that are chained in the galleys, or confined in dark prisons and loathsome dungeons; but how much more abject and vile is the slavery of the sinner! No slavery of the body is equal to the bondage of the mind: no chains press so closely, or gall so cruelly, as the fetters of sin, which corrode the very substance of the soul, and fret every faculty.

It must, indeed, be confessed, that there are some profligates, so hardened by customs, as to be past all feeling; and, because insensible of their bondage, boast of this insensibility as a mark of their native freedom, and of their happiness. Vain men! they might extol, with equal propriety, the peculiar happiness of an apoplexy, or the profound tranquillity of a lethargy.

Thus have we endeavoured to place, in a plain and conspicuous light, some of the peculiar excellencies of the Christian religion; and, from hence, many useful reflections will naturally arise in the mind of every attentive reader. It is the religion of Jesus that hath removed idolatry and superstition, and brought immortality to light, when concealed under a veil of darkness almost impenetrable. This hath set the great truths of religion in a clear and conspicuous point of view, and proposed new and powerful motives to influence our minds, and to determine our conduct. Nothing is enjoined to be believed, but what is worthy of God; nothing to be practised, but what is friendly to man. All the doctrines of the Gospel are rational and consistent; all its precepts are truly wise, just, and good. The gospel contains nothing grievous to an ingenuous mind: it debars us from nothing,

but doing harm to ourselves, or to our fellow-creatures; and permits us to range any where, but in the paths of danger and destruction. It only requires us to act up to its excellent commands, and to prefer to the vanishing pleasure of sin, the smiles of a reconciled God, and an *eternal weight of glory*.

Surely no man who is a real friend to the cause of virtue, and to the interest of mankind, can ever be an enemy to Christianity, if he truly understands it, and seriously reflects on its wise and useful tendency. It conducteth us to our journey's end, by the plainest and securest path; where the *steps are not straitened, and where he that runneth stumbleth not*.

We ought daily to adore the God of nature, for lighting up the sun, that glorious, though imperfect image of his own unapproachable lustre; and appointing it to gild the earth with its various rays, to cheer us with its benign influence, and to guide and direct us in our journies and our labours. But how incomparably more valuable is that *day-spring from on high, which hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace?* Oh Christians, whose eyes are so happy to see, and your ears to hear, what abundant reason have you to give daily and hourly praise to your beneficent Creator! When, therefore, your minds are delighted with contemplating the riches of the Gospel, when you reflect (as you certainly must do) with wonder and joy on the happy means of your redemption; when you feel the burthen of your guilt removed, the freedom of your address to the throne of Grace encouraged, and see the prospect of a fair inheritance of eternal glory opening upon you; then, in the pleasing transports of your souls, borrow the joyful anthem of the psalmist, and say, with the humblest gratitude and self-resignation, *God is the Lord who sheweth us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even to the horns of the altar. Adore God, who first commanded the light to shine out of darkness, that by the discoveries of his word, and the operations of his spirit, he hath shined in your hearts, to give you the knowledge of his glory, as reflected from the face of his Son.*

Blest are the souls that hear and know
The Gospel's joyful sound;
Peace shall attend the paths they go,
And light their steps surround.

Their joy shall bear their spirits up,
Thro' their Redeemer's name!
His righteousness exalts their hope,
Nor Satan dares condemn.

The Lord, our glory and defence,
Strength and salvation gives:
Christian, thy king for ever reigns
Thy God for ever lives.

Let us, therefore, who live under the Gospel, the most gracious dispensation bestowed by God to mankind, *count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord;* and not suffer ourselves, by the slight cavils of

unbelievers, to be *moved away from the hope of the Gospel*. Let us demonstrate that we believe the superior excellency of the Christian dispensation, by conforming to its precepts. Let us shew that we are Christians in deed, and in truth; not by endless disputes about trifles, and the transports of a blind zeal, but by abounding in those *fruits of righteousness, which are, through Christ, to the praise and glory of God*.

From what has been said, we may clearly perceive how groundless all those prejudices are, which some conceive against religion, as if it was a peevish, morose thing, burdensome to human nature, and inconsistent with the true enjoyment of life. Such sentiments are too apt to prevail in the heat of youth, when the spirits are brisk and lively, and the passions warm and impetuous; but it is wholly a mistake, and a mistake of the most dangerous tendency. The truth is, there is no pleasure like that of a good conscience: no real peace but what results from a sense of the Divine favour. This enables the mind, and can alone support it under all the various and unequal scenes of the present state of trial. This lays a sure foundation of an easy, comfortable life, of a serene, peaceful death, and of eternal joy and happiness hereafter; whereas vice is ruinous to all our most valuable interests; spoils the native beauty, and subverts the order of the soul; renders us the scorn of man, the rejected of God, and, without timely repentance, will rob us of a happy eternity. Religion is the health, the liberty, and the happiness of the Soul; sin is the disease, the servitude, and destruction of it.—It will, perhaps, be said, that the sons of vice and riot have pleasure in sensual indulgences. This we allow; but must observe, that it is altogether of the lowest kind, empty, fleeting, and transient: *like the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the mirth of the wicked*. It makes a noise and a blaze for the present; but soon vanishes away into smoke and vapour.

On the other hand, the pleasure of religion is solid and lasting; and will attend us through all, even the last stages of life. When we have passed the levity of youth, and have lost all relish for

gay entertainments; when old age steals upon us, and stoops towards the grave, this will cleave fast to us, and give us relief.

Clad in this immortal robe, we need not fear the awful summons of the king of terrors, nor regret our retiring into the chambers of the dust. Our immortal part will wing its way to the arms of its Redeemer, and find rest in the heavenly mansions. And though our earthly part, this tabernacle of clay, returns to its original dust, and is dissolved, our joy, our consolation, our confidence is, that *we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*.

Such will be the happy consequences attendant on all those who strictly adhere to the Christian religion, and diligently, through the course of their lives, follow (as far as human nature will admit) the precepts laid down by their Divine Master, the Great Saviour and Redeemer of the world.

Who shall inhabit in thy hill,
O God of Holiness?
Whom will the Lord admit to dwell
So near his throne of grace?

The man that walks in pious ways,
And works with righteous hands;
That trusts his Maker's promises,
And follows his commands.

He speaks the meaning of his heart,
Nor flanders with his tongue;
Will scarce believe an ill report,
Nor do his neighbour wrong.

The wealthy sinner he contemns,
Loves all that fear the Lord;
And throughout life, in all he says,
Most strictly keeps his word.

His hands disdain a golden bribe
And never gripe the poor:
This man shall dwell with God on earth,
And find his heav'n secure.



A NEW AND COMPLETE
UNIVERSAL HISTORY
OF THE
HOLY BIBLE.

PART II. BOOK II.

From the Ascension of Our Blessed Lord into Heaven, to the full Establishment of Christianity, by his Apostles and other Propagators of his Gospel.

[Including a Period of 64 Years.]

CHAP. I.

After Our Lord's ascension into heaven the apostles return to Jerusalem, and elect Matthias into their number. They are all filled with the Holy Ghost. The Jews are surprized at the event, and some of them endeavour to turn it into ridicule; but Peter confutes their calumny, and, by an admirable speech on the occasion, makes many converts. Peter performs a miracle, and makes another speech to the people, which proves highly successful to the propagation of the Gospel. At the instigation of the rulers of the Jews, the twelve apostles are committed to prison, and taken before the Sanhedrim; but, after an unanswerable vindication of their conduct, are dismissed. The punishment of Ananias and Sapphira. Peter cures many people of different infirmities. The apostles are again committed to prison, but released in the night by an angel from heaven. They, however, go before the Sanhedrim, and are sentenced to be scourged. They elect seven deacons as stewards of the public stock for the relief of the distressed. Stephen, one of the new-elected deacons, is accused of blasphemy, and taken before the Sanhedrim. He vindicates himself before his judges, and boldly accuses the Jews of being more impious than their ancestors. The Jews are so enraged at this, that they unmercifully drag him out of the city, and stone him to death. Saul, a young man of Cilicia, is particularly active in the death of Stephen, and, at his instigation, most of the Christian converts are compelled to leave Jerusalem.

THE Blessed Saviour of the world having fulfilled all things prophesied of his mission here on earth, and having, in a most solemn manner, taken leave of his disciples, visibly retired before their eyes to eternal rest in his Father's kingdom. With hearts full of grief and admiration they deplored the loss of the presence of their dear-loved Lord; and, with longing eyes, paid their last attendance till he disappeared. They continued, for some time, fondly looking towards the place where their Lord was gone, till at

length two angels in the shape of men, and gloriously apparelled, appeared before them, and delivered a message of consolation to this effect:

“Forbear, O Galileans, your further admiration: Your gracious Lord, whom even now you beheld ascending to heaven, shall one day come to judge the world in as glorious a manner as he now departed from you. He hath not absolutely left you, but is gone to take possession of that kingdom which he will continue to govern to the end of the world.”

The apostles and disciples of Our Lord (among whom

whom was Mary the mother of Jesus, and some other pious women who had attended him in his ministry) being greatly comforted by this Divine message, immediately returned to Jerusalem, where they spent their time in acts of religious worship, assembling daily in a certain upper room which they had made choice of for that purpose.

Peter had thought it necessary that a proper person should be chosen to supply the place of the perfidious Judas, that the number of the apostles might be twelve, as was originally appointed by their Master. To effect this, in one of their assemblies (which consisted of an hundred and twenty) Peter addressed himself to his fellow-apostles in a speech which he had made for the purpose, the substance of which was to this effect: "Ye know, brethren, what the royal prophet David * foretold, and which has been punctually fulfilled, concerning Judas, who was of our society, a fellow-disciple, and an apostle chosen with us. For a sum of money he betrayed his Master to his enemies, after which, being troubled for what he had done, he returned the money to the priest, who, not daring to put it into the treasury, bought a field with it for the interment of strangers. This fact, and the fate of Judas, was universally known to all that dwelt in Jerusalem, and therefore the field that was bought with that money was vulgarly known by the name of the Field of Blood. To Judas, therefore, belongs that which is mentioned by the holy Psalmist †, not by way of execration, but of prediction: that as he should come to a desperate miserable end, so the office which he had held with the rest of the twelve, should be bestowed on another. It is then our duty, according to this prophecy, to make choice of some one of these persons that are present (and who have continued with us ever since Our Lord undertook the charge and care of us, till his ascension into heaven) that he may succeed Judas in the apostleship."

The proposition made by Peter was unanimously approved of by the assembly; upon which two candidates were immediately nominated, namely, Jonas, surnamed Barnabas, and Matthias, one of the seventy disciples. The choice of one of these two was to be determined by lot, previous to which the apostles solemnly invoked the Divine direction in the following words: *Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of those two thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas, by transgression, fell.*

* Psal. xli. 9.

† Psal. lxxix. 25. and cix. 8.

‡ This word is derived from the Greek, and signifies the *fiftieth*, because the Feast of Pentecost was celebrated the *fiftieth* day after the sixteenth of the month Nisan, which was the second day of the Feast of the Passover, Levit. xxiii. 15, 16. And for the same reason it is called the *Feast of Weeks*, because it was observed seven weeks after the Passover, Deut. xvi. 9. It was at first instituted in order to oblige the Jews to repair to the temple of the Lord, there to acknowledge his dominion and sovereignty over all their labours, and there to render thanks to him for the law, which

Acts i. 24, 25. Having said this, they proceeded to draw lots, which happening to fall on Matthias, he was accordingly elected into the number of the twelve apostles.

The number of the apostles being now complete, on the day of Pentecost ‡, they all assembled together at their accustomed place, in order to perform their religious duties. While they were thus employed, a prodigious noise (much like the rushing of a loud impetuous wind) suddenly filled all the house in which they were, and a kind of fiery vapour, or exhalation, formed in the figure of a man's tongue, but divided a little at the tip, sat on the head of each; whereupon they were all immediately filled with the Holy Ghost, and, by its Divine inspiration, were enabled to speak in several different languages.

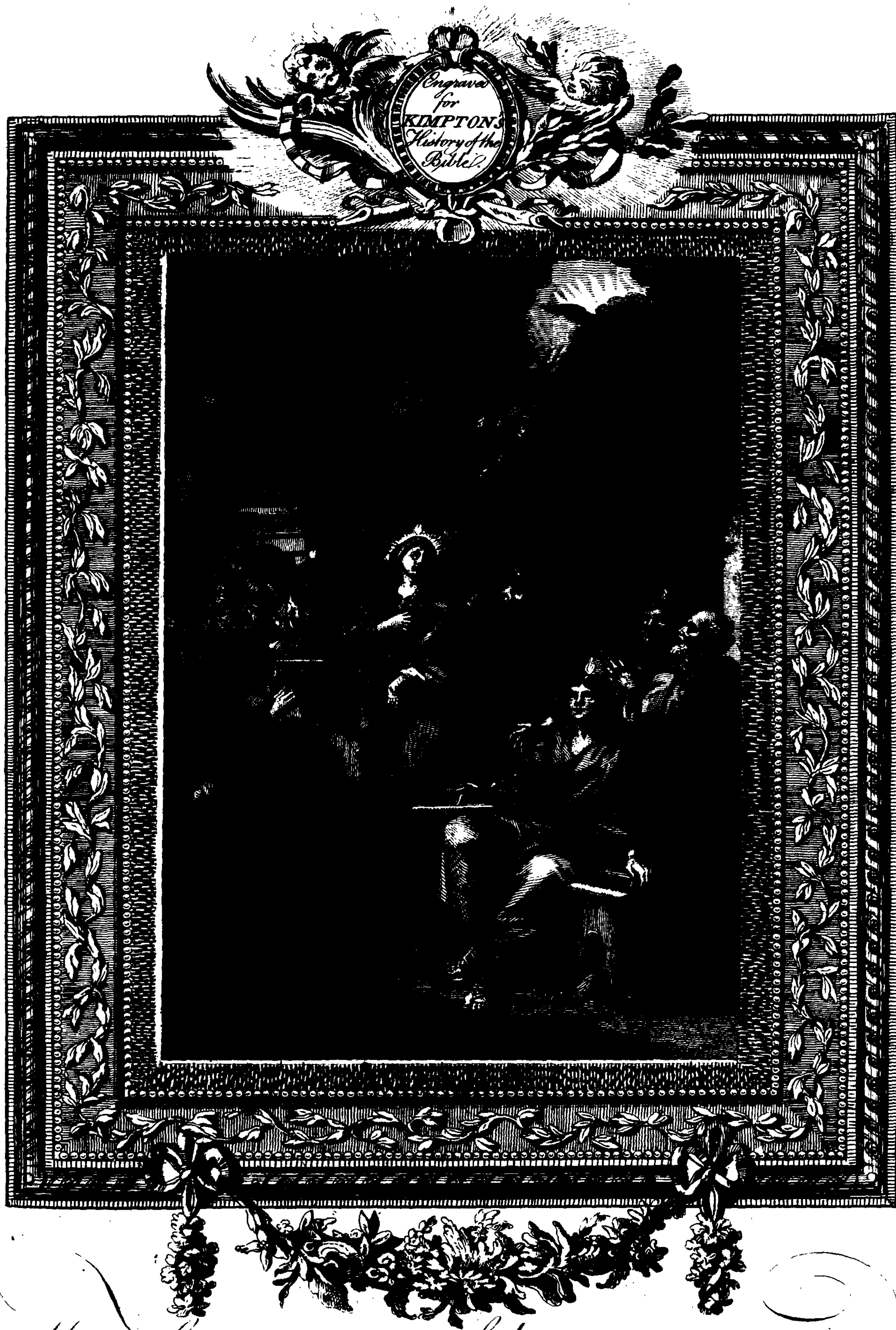
At this time there were at Jerusalem many Jews and proselytes, who had come thither from different parts of the world, to the celebration of the feast. When these, therefore, were informed of the great miracle which had taken place with the apostles, and were convinced of the truth of it by hearing them speak the languages of their respective countries, they were greatly astonished, and knew not what to make of so singular an event. Some of them argued among themselves to this effect: "How have these men, who are natives of Galilee, and have continued all their lives there, acquired this knowledge? For in our respective languages we hear them preaching the doctrine of Christ, and the wonderful things God hath wrought by him. This certainly must imply something of very great moment." But others were of a different opinion, and, in a scoffing manner, ridiculed the miracle, attributing the powers possessed by the apostles to arise from inebriation: *These men (said they) are full of new wine.*

To destroy this calumny, and to open the eyes of the yet deluded and perverse Jews, Peter, in the name of the rest, addressed the multitude in a most admirable speech, the substance of which was to the following effect: "Ye men of Judea, and all that at this time see and hear what the Lord hath done, be assured these things are not the effect of wine: ye know, in your consciences, it cannot be so, since *it is but the third hour of the day* §. But this is the completion of a famous prophecy of Joel, who saith, *In the last days I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams* ||. All ranks and qualities of men shall receive the effusion of the Spirit of God, and those who were never brought up in the schools of the prophets, shall

he gave them on the *fiftieth* day after their departure out of Egypt. In like manner, the Christian Church celebrates the feast of Pentecost fifty days, or seven weeks after the Passover, or resurrection of Our Blessed Saviour, to put us in remembrance, that the *Gifts of the Spirit* were then poured out in a plentiful manner, as the *first-fruits* of Our Saviour's ascension into heaven, and that the *Gospel* began to be published by the apostles on the like day that the ancient Law was given to the Hebrews.

§ That is, nine o'clock, the time of morning prayers, to which the Jews generally went fasting.

|| See Joel ii. 28.



Miraculous **DESCENT** *of the* **HOLY GHOST.**

“ shall be enabled to preach the Gospel of Christ
 “ wherever they go. And after that there shall
 “ be fearful and astonishing sights and prodigies,
 “ and many great slaughters in Judea, as fore-
 “ runners and prognostics of the destruction
 “ which shall befall this people for their cruci-
 “ fying Christ, and from which the only way to
 “ rescue yourselves is, to repent and acknow-
 “ ledge him, which is the design of this mira-
 “ culous descent of the Holy Ghost. Observe
 “ and attend, ye men of Israel, for you are chiefly
 “ concerned in this great affair. This Jesus of
 “ Nazareth being demonstrated to be sent from
 “ God by the mighty works he did among you,
 “ all which you know to be true: Him, I say,
 “ being permitted to fall into your hands, you
 “ apprehended and barbarously crucified: Him,
 “ whom God, by his determinate council, had
 “ given to retrieve you from your last condition,
 “ ye, with profane hands, have slain. This same
 “ Jesus, whom ye thus treated, hath God raised
 “ again, delivering him from the power of death;
 “ and, besides many other things, the prophe-
 “ cies concerning him required that he should
 “ not long lie under death. Hear what David
 “ the royal psalmist says, *I have set the Lord al-*
 “ *ways before me: because he is at my right hand,*
 “ *I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad,*
 “ *and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in*
 “ *hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell;*
 “ *neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see cor-*
 “ *ruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in*
 “ *thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand*
 “ *there are pleasures for evermore.* Give me leave,
 “ brethren, to speak freely concerning David,
 “ who thus prophesied. He died like other
 “ men, had a solemn interment, and we have
 “ his monument this day to shew, and from
 “ whence he never arose. Therefore, he spake
 “ not of himself, but by way of prediction of
 “ the Messiah, whom he knew would infallibly
 “ spring from his loins, and be a prince and ruler
 “ of his church. These words of his were pro-
 “ phetic, and literally verified in the resurrec-
 “ tion of Jesus, whose soul did not continue so
 “ long in a state of separation as that his body
 “ should be corrupted: and accordingly God
 “ raised him up in three days, of which all we
 “ apostles were eye-witnesses. He having, there-
 “ fore, assumed his regal state and office in hea-
 “ ven, and God having given him power to send
 “ the Holy Ghost, he hath now punctually ful-
 “ filled his promise in sending it on us in the
 “ most extensive manner; one great effect of
 “ which yourselves can testify, by having heard
 “ us speak languages which, a short time before,
 “ we did not understand. This great and im-
 “ portant truth, therefore, I now proclaim to
 “ you, That God the Father hath raised up that
 “ Christ, whom ye Jews have crucified, and
 “ that he now sits on the right hand of him in
 “ the kingdom of heaven.”

This speech, or rather sermon, of Peter's, so wrought upon the minds of the people, that they called out most passionately to him, and the rest of the apostles, requesting their advice what measures they should pursue, in order to shake off that guilt with which they had been so long loaded. Peter readily complied with their re-

quest, and in a most tender and affectionate address, told them, that in order to lay aside their infidelity, they must, with true contrition, acknowledge their sins, enter upon the Christian profession with a firm resolution of never falling from it; and that they must receive baptism from the apostles, who were thereby empowered to convey remission of sins to all true penitents. *Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord Our God shall call.* Acts ii. 38, 39.

In consequence of this affectionate address, those who were really touched with what Peter had said immediately renounced their former course of life, and proved the sincerity of their hearts by receiving baptism. On that day about three thousand people were converted to the faith of Christ, who continued assiduous in hearing the apostles teach, and in bringing their goods liberally for the relief of the distressed. Nor were the converts only impressed with fear and reverence, but a general surprize took place among all that saw these strange and early operations of the Holy Ghost, which were still farther confirmed by several miracles performed by the apostles.

The Gospel thus gaining ground, those that received it assembled together for the service of God, constantly observing the times of public prayers, and receiving the sacrament of the Lord's supper: they distributed to the necessities of the poorer sort as freely as God had given them ability, spending their time in acts of devotion and charity, and exercising works of mercy to all. By the pious examples of these many others were induced to join them which gave the apostles a fruitful harvest of their ministry, and by their repeated exhortations, others were daily rescued from the wicked and dangerous converse of the perverse Jews, and heartily embraced the doctrine of Christ.

After this wonderful reformation among the people in consequence of Peter's discourses, that apostle, accompanied by John, went one day to the temple about three o'clock in the afternoon, which was one of the times generally set apart for prayer. As they entered in at the gate of the temple towards the east in Solomon's porch, which was called the *beautiful gate*, they saw a poor cripple, who had been lame from his birth, lying there, and begging alms of those who passed him. As soon as the cripple saw Peter and John, he looked up in their faces and earnestly begged charity of them; upon which Peter, looking stedfastly at him, said, *Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.* No sooner were these words spoken than the poor cripple was made whole. His joints became strait and his nerves strong, so that he went with the apostles into the temple, *walking, and leaping, and praising God.*

The poor man, who had sat daily, for a long time, asking alms at the door of the temple, was universally known by the people, who seeing him walking and praising God, were amazed

at the greatness of the cure: they therefore flocked in great numbers round the apostles, by whom the poor man kept close, being unwilling to part with those from whom he had received so distinguished a benefit. Peter, observing the astonishment of the multitude, and thinking it a convenient opportunity of increasing the number of his followers, addressed himself to them in a long and very pertinent harangue, the substance of which was to this effect: "Ye men of Israel, why do you look upon this cure as a thing strange: Or why do you attribute any thing to us in this matter, as if it were in our power to perform so great a miracle? The God of our fathers gave this power to Jesus, whom you delivered to Pilate to be crucified, releasing a known murderer and a thief, and putting to death Him, who came to give life to the world; whom God hath been pleased to raise from the dead, and make us witnesses thereof. Be assured, it is by belief in him that this man hath been recovered from his lameness. The man you all well know, having, for many years, seen him a begging cripple; and the faith we have in the power of Him on whom we believe, hath wrought the remarkable cure at which you all so greatly wonder. I do imagine, brethren, that such among you who rejected Christ did it through ignorance, not knowing him to be the Messiah; and that the like was the case with your rulers. But by these means the many prophecies in the scriptures, that the Messiah should be put to death, have been fulfilled. Do you, therefore, amend your lives, that your past offences may be pardoned, and that, at the second coming of Christ for the delivery and rescue of the faithful, you may, by repentance, be admitted into the number of the elect. The Christ you have persecuted, and of whose resurrection we have been eye-witnesses, hath now entered upon his sovereignty in heaven, whereby hath been fulfilled all the prophecies concerning him, particularly that of Moses, who truly said unto the fathers, *A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me, and him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul which shall not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.* And not only Moses, but all the prophets, from Samuel, as *many as have spoken**, have foretold the coming of the Messiah, with the destruction of those who should reject, and the especial mercies to them that should believe in him. Ye are the particular persons of whom the prophets foretold, and to whom the promise and covenant which God made with Abraham (*that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed*) did primarily belong. Ye are the heirs of this covenant, and God hath been

"pleased to make the first overtures of mercy to you, that ye might receive the Gospel of his beloved Son, and repent of the iniquities which ye have done unto him."—This was the purport of St. Peter's speech on this occasion; and such was its efficacy, that it converted so many of his hearers, as to make the whole number amount to no less than five thousand.

While Peter was instructing the people, *the captain of the temple*, at the instigation of the priests and sadduces, came with an armed force, suddenly seized the two apostles, and conducted them to prison. The next morning the great Sanhedrim met, and having ordered the apostles to be brought before them, demanded by what power they had wrought that miracle upon the lame man, and who it was that gave them authority to preach to the people? In answer to these questions, Peter, being endued with an extraordinary presence of mind and elocution of tongue, spoke to this effect: "Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, we are this day examined before you concerning an action, which is so far from being criminal, that it is an act of special mercy. Be assured, that the miraculous cure performed on the lame man was wrought by no other means, than by invoking the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, and God most miraculously raised again. This is he that was prophesied of under the title of a refuse stone, rejected by you, the chief of the Jews, and treated with contempt; but is now, by his resurrection, enthroned in power, and is, indeed, become the ruler and king of the church, the prime foundation-stone of the whole fabric. In him alone must salvation now be hoped for by all; nor can ye expect to be saved, unless you readily receive, and heartily embrace, his doctrine."

The council, seeing with what courage and freedom of speech the apostles behaved themselves, and withal considering that their education alone could not have raised them above the capacity of other men (being neither skilled in the learning of the Jews, nor, as men of distinction, instructed in their laws) they were greatly astonished; and still more so, when they recollected that the two apostles were of those who had attended Jesus in his life-time, and saw the man on whom they had wrought the miraculous cure stand by them ready to attest the truth of it. From these considerations they knew not, for some time, how to act, till at length they resolved to hold a private conference among themselves, and, for that purpose, ordered the apostles to withdraw. As soon as they were gone, the council entered into debate on the subject, arguing with one another to this effect. "As to the men, we have nothing to accuse them of; for, that they have performed a great miracle is apparent to many, and the man that was healed

* The account of the prophets is here begun from Samuel, because the schools of the prophets were first instituted and erected by him; and not that there was no prophet before him. The sons of the prophets spent the greater part of their time in studying the law, and praising and serving

God, and some were sent on messages to the people (for all were not called to the prophetic office) and therefore it is added, *as many as have spoken*; that is, as many out of the schools of the prophets as were Divinely called to the prophetic office.

“healed is a living witness of the truth of it. Since, therefore, they have not been guilty of any breach of our laws, to prevent their further seducing the people (who are too apt to be led away by them) we will call them in, and forbid them, upon severe penalties, to preach Christ and his Gospel any more.” In consequence of this resolution, the two apostles, were called in, and commanded not to talk privately, or teach publicly, any thing concerning the faith of Christ. But the Christian heroes, whose commission was from a higher power than any on earth, slighting this interdict, and all their threats, made answer, “That, since they had received a command from heaven, to declare to all nations what they had heard or seen, it was certainly their duty to obey God rather than them.” This was a fair appeal to the consciences of their very judges; but their judges, instead of being satisfied with it, would probably have proceeded to some greater violence, had not the people’s veneration for the apostles put a restraint upon their malice. All, therefore, that they dared to do was, to repeat and enforce their menaces; having done which, they ordered them to be discharged.

As soon as the two apostles were dismissed, they returned with great joy to their brethren, who, with infinite satisfaction, heard the report of all that had passed. They then unanimously glorified God, who, by his holy prophet David, had foretold what was now come to pass; that the Jews should oppose Christ, say false things of him, deny and crucify him first, and, when God had raised him from the dead, oppose the preaching of him; that the princes and governors, Herod and Pontius Pilate, should combine against him, and the rulers should, in council, endeavour to suppress the propagation of his doctrine. *And now Lord, said they, behold their threatenings; and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.* No sooner had they concluded their prayer than the house in which they were was shaken with a mighty wind, in like manner as it had been before on the day of Pentecost; whereupon they were instantly replenished with fresh measures of the Holy Ghost, and, notwithstanding all the threats of the Jewish rulers, found themselves invigorated to preach the Gospel of Christ with more boldness and resolution than ever.

The charity, at this time, among believers, was very large and extensive. Such as had houses, or possessions of any kind, sold them, and deposited the money in the hands of the apostles, to be by them distributed, in due proportions, according to the necessities of their brethren. This a certain Levite, (a native of Cyprus, called Joses, but, by the apostles, surnamed Barnabas, or *the Son of Consolation*) did with great readiness and singleness of heart, selling the estate of which he was possessed, and giving the whole produce to the apostles. In imitation of this good man, one Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, resolved to *devote all they had* to the service of the church; in consequence of which they sold

their estate, but afterwards altering their minds jointly agreed to keep some part of the money, intending thereby to impose upon the apostles. Ananias going first into the presence of the apostles, with great assurance, and seeming cheerfulness, produced the money, and laid it at their feet. But Peter, who, by Divine inspiration, knew the cheat, in a holy indignation and abhorrence of so vile an act of sacrilege, reprehended him in words to this effect: “How, O Ananias, hath Satan persuaded thee thus to attempt to deceive the Holy Ghost, in purloining part of that which thou hadst consecrated to God’s service, and the use of his church? Before thy land was sold, was it not wholly thine? And when it was sold, didst thou not receive the full price for it? Was it not then in thy full power to perform thy vow? Thy iniquitous conduct in concealing a part of the money is not only an injury to the church, but to God, who knew thy private vow, that it was consecrating of all, and not this part only which thou hast brought to us.” These piercing words, together with the horrors of conscious guilt, so impressed the mind and heart of Ananias, that he fell down dead on the spot, to the great astonishment and terror of all present; and his body was immediately taken away for interment. About three hours after his wife Sapphira went to the assembly, not in the least suspecting what had happened to her sacrilegious consort. Peter asked her whether the sum which her husband had brought was the whole for which their estate was sold. To this she answered in the affirmative; upon which Peter reprehended her in words to this effect: “How durst you both combine to provoke God, to try whether he will punish this your impious fraud, or not? That you may see how highly God resents your sacrilegious intentions, behold the men are coming in, who have buried your dead husband, and now they shall do as much for you.” No sooner had he spoken these words than Sapphira fell dead at his feet, and the same persons that had buried Ananias, carried her out from the assembly, and laid her by him. These remarkable instances of the Divine wrath filled all the converts with fear and trembling, and prevented, in a great measure, that hypocrisy and dissimulation by which others might have flattered themselves with deceiving the church.

Miracles of severity were not, however, much practised by the apostles. Acts of mercy were their proper province, and healing the diseased and freeing the *possessed*, a great part of their employment. In the execution of this business the Divine power so far attended them, that even the shadow of Peter passing by cured the sick, who, in the open streets were laid on beds and couches, on purpose to receive the benefit of his salutary influence. Nor were these marvellous cures confined to the inhabitants of Jerusalem only, but the people of several neighbouring towns and villages brought thither their sick, their lame, and *possessed*, all of whom were, by the apostles, relieved from their respective infirmities.

The same of these cures, and the great success

cesses which Christianity gained by the miracles and preaching of the apostles, reaching the ears of the high-priest, and some others of the Sanhedrim (who were of the sect of the Sadducees) they were highly incensed against the apostles, and therefore caused them to be apprehended, and thrown into the common prison. But that very night they were released from their confinement. The prison-doors, though fastened with the utmost caution, opened of themselves at the approach of a messenger from the courts of heaven, who commanded the apostles to leave the dungeon, repair to the temple, and preach the glad tidings of the Gospel to the people.

Early the next morning the council again assembled, and, thinking the apostles were in safe custody, dispatched their officers to the prison, with orders to bring them immediately before them. The officers accordingly went to obey their orders, but, behold, when they came to the prison, they could not find the apostles. In consequence of this they returned to the council, telling them, that the doors of the prison were shut, indeed, and the keepers all upon their guard, but as for the persons whom they were sent for, there was not one of them to be found. This intelligence greatly surprized the council, who wondered how it could be, that, the prison being shut, and the guard at the doors, the prisoners should escape. But while they were in this state of perplexity a messenger arrived with news, that the men, whom they had the night before committed to prison, were then in the temple, preaching and instructing the people. In consequence of this the captain of the guard, with some other officers, immediately went to the temple, and entreated the apostles to go before the council, not daring to offer any violence to them, for fear of being stoned by the people.

As soon as the apostles appeared before their judges, the high priest demanded how they durst presume to preach a doctrine, which so lately had been interdicted them? To which Peter, in the name of the rest, returned them an answer to this effect: "We certainly ought to obey God rather than man. And though you have so barbarously and contumeliously treated the Blessed Jesus, yet God hath raised him up to be a prince and Saviour, to give both repentance and remission of sins. And of these things both we, and the miraculous power which the Holy Ghost hath conferred on all Christians, are witnesses."

This answer greatly exasperated the council, and they began to consult among themselves in what manner they should punish them. Their first resolution was, to put them to death, but this was over-ruled by the wise advice of a certain Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a man of the most distinguished reputation, and universally respected. After ordering the apostles to withdraw, he advised the council to proceed in the affair with great caution, lest bad consequences might attend their revolutions. He told them that several persons had formerly raised parties, and drawn great numbers of people after them; but that all their schemes had miscarried, and their designs rendered abortive, without the interposition of that court. That they would, there-

fore, do well to let the apostles alone; for if their doctrines and designs were of human invention, they would come to nothing; but if they were of God, all their powers and policies would be of none effect, and sad experience would too soon convince them, that they had themselves opposed the counsels of the Most High.

This speech so far diverted the indignation of the council, that they changed the sentence (at first designed against the apostles lives) into a corporal punishment. They therefore, after remanding them into court, ordered them to be immediately scourged, which being done, they strictly charged them not to preach any more in the name of Jesus, and, with this charge, gave them their liberty.

But this punishment and injunction had little effect on the disciples of the Blessed Jesus. They returned home in triumph, rejoicing that they were thought worthy to suffer in so righteous a cause, and to undergo shame and reproach for so kind and powerful a Master. Nor could all the opposition of man, blended with the malice of the power of darkness, discourage them from performing their duty to God, or lessen their zeal for preaching, both in public and private, the doctrine of the Gospel.

The great increase of believers, and the ready access to the common fund for the relief of the poor, made the institution of an other order of men in the Christian church highly necessary. Among the great number of converts were some Jews, who, by having been long in foreign countries, had disused the Hebrew, and spoke only the Grecian tongue, so that they were considered by the common Jews as if they had been foreigners. These people complained to the apostles, that, in the distribution of the charity-money, an undue preference was given to the Hebrew widows, whilst theirs were too frequently neglected. In consequence of this complaint the apostles assembled together the whole multitude of their disciples, when Peter, in the name of the rest, addressed them in words to this effect: "It is not reasonable that we should neglect the preaching of the Gospel, by undertaking the care of looking after the poor. Therefore, brethren, do you nominate to us seven men, who have shewn themselves to be faithful, trusty persons, eminent among you for wisdom, and other good gifts, that we may appoint (that is, consecrate or ordain) to the office of Deacons in the church, and entrust them with the care of distributing to those who want out of the public stock. In the choice of these, let it be observed, that they be persons well versed in the knowledge of Divine matters, that they may give assistance to us occasionally in preaching the word, and receiving proselytes to the faith by Baptism. And by these means we shall be less interrupted in our daily employment of praying, and preaching the Gospel."

This proposal was highly satisfactory to the whole assembly, who immediately nominated seven persons, namely, Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Pharnenas, and Nicolas. These seven they presented to the twelve apostles,

apostles, who, by prayer, and laying their hands on them, ordained them to the office of deacons*. Of these seven, the most eminent for the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit was Stephen. He preached the Gospel with a noble courage and resolution, and confirmed it with many public and unquestionable miracles among the people, insomuch, that by his means the Christian religion gained ground abundantly. Converts came in apace; and great numbers of the priests themselves laid aside their prejudices and embraced the Gospel.

The great zeal of Stephen for propagating the Gospel, and the success that attended his endeavours, soon awakened the malice of his adversaries, who procured some members† of the most learned synagogues, then in Jerusalem, to dispute with him. But, when they found their disputants baffled, and unable to withstand the force of those arguments with which the Divine wisdom had inspired Stephen, they betook themselves to vile practices. Having procured some profligate men to accuse him of blasphemy, they caused him to be apprehended, and, in a tumultuous manner, took him before the Sanhedrim, in order to obtain a formal sentence against him.

While Stephen stood before the council, the judges, and all the people then present, beheld a lustre and radiancy in his countenance, not unlike the appearance of an angel. This, however, did not so far intimidate the Sanhedrim as to prevent them from listening to the accusation of the false-witnesses, who charged him with blasphemy, in foretelling the destruction of the temple, and the change of the Mosaic rites and ceremonies. *This man (said they) ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law. For we have heard him say, Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.*

The high-priest, having heard the accusation against Stephen, asked him, whether or not he was guilty of thus prophesying the destruction of the temple, and change of the Jewish religion? In answer to this question, Stephen made

a very grave and severe oration, the substance of which was to the following effect:

“Hearken unto me, ye descendants of Jacob; the Almighty, whose glory is from everlasting, appeared to our father Abraham, before he sojourned in Charran, even while he dwelt in Mesopotamia, commanding him to leave his country and relations, and retire into a land which he would shew him.

“Abraham obeyed the Divine mandate; he left the land of the Chaldeans and pitched his tent in Charran; from whence, after his father was dead, he removed into Canaan, even the land you now inhabit; but he gave him no inheritance in this country, not even so much as to set his foot upon. He promised, indeed, he would give it him for a possession, which should descend to his posterity, though at this time he had no child.

“God also indicated to him that his seed should sojourn in a strange land; the people of which should make them bondmen and treat them cruelly four hundred years. After which, he would judge that nation, bring out his people who should serve him in this place, as an earnest of which, he gave him the covenant of circumcision; and afterwards a son whom Abraham circumcised the eighth day, calling his name Isaac; who begat Jacob, and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs.

“But these, moved with envy, sold their brother Joseph into Egypt, where the Almighty protected him, delivered him from all his afflictions, indued him with wisdom, and gave him favour in the sight of Pharaoh, the monarch of Egypt, who made him governor both of his house and kingdom.

“Soon after this exaltation of Joseph, the countries of Egypt and Canaan were afflicted with a terrible famine, and our fathers found no sustenance either for themselves or flocks. But as soon as Jacob heard the welcome tidings, that there was corn in Egypt, he sent our fathers thither to purchase bread for the people of his household. And in their second journey thither, Joseph made himself known to his brethren, and also

* The names of these seven deacons are all of Greek extract, from whence we may infer, that, very probably, they were all natives of Greece, and that, consequently, by their designation, the church was desirous to give full satisfaction to the complaint of those, whose widows had been before neglected. Of the two first of these, viz. Stephen and Philip, the sacred history has given us a sufficient account, but of the rest we have nothing certain, except we will admit of what the Latins tell us of Prochorus, viz. that on the 9th of August he suffered martyrdom at Antioch, after having made himself famous for his miracles: of Nicator, that on the 10th of January he suffered in the Isle of Cyprus, after having given great demonstrations of his faith and virtue: of Timon, that on the 19th of April, he was first thrown into the fire, and, when he had miraculously escaped from thence, he was fixed upon a cross at Corinth: of Parmenas, that on the 23d of January he suffered at Philippi, in Macedonia: and of Nicolas, that, either by design or indiscretion, he gave rise to the infamous sect of Nicolaitans, and therefore no Christian church has ever yet paid any honour to his memory.

† As there were people of all nations, proselytes to the Jewish religion, dwelling at Jerusalem, it is reasonable to imagine, that they had synagogues, or places appointed for

prayer, for hearing the law, and pious exhortations in their own languages. The Jews tell us, that there were no less than four hundred and eighty of these in Jerusalem, which were so many inferior churches, and subordinate to the temple, as their cathedral. These synagogues very probably were built, and maintained by the several nations, or degrees of people that resorted to them, and from these they had their names, as the Synagogue of Libertines. i. e. of such as were Denizens of Rome, of the Cyrenians, the Alexandrians, &c. But it is to be observed of these synagogues, that they were not only places of religious worship, but a sort of colleges, or schools likewise, where persons were instructed in the law and traditions of the Jews. The Jews at this time were dispersed in several foreign parts, and from these they sent their youth to Jerusalem to be educated in the synagogue, or college, peculiar to their respective countries. St. Paul was of the province of Cilicia, and, as it is reasonable to think that he studied in a college, either belonging to the country where he was born, or proper to his quality, as a freeman of Rome; there seems to be no incongruity in supposing, that he might possibly be one, either of those Libertine, or Cilician disputants, who entered the lists with St. Stephen.

also informed Pharaoh of his country and relations. After which Joseph's father, with his whole house, consisting of threescore and fifteen souls, went down into Egypt, where both Jacob and our fathers died, and were carried to Sychem, and deposited in the sepulchre purchased of the sons of Emmor, the father of Sychem.

"But as the time for fulfilling the promise made to Abraham approached, the people multiplied in Egypt, till another king arose, who was not acquainted with the merits of Joseph, and the great things he had done for that country. This prince used our fathers with cruelty, and artfully attempted to destroy all the male children. At this time Moses was born, and being exceeding fair, was nourished three months in his father's house: but as it was dangerous to conceal him there any longer, he was hid among the flags on the bank of the river; when the daughter of Pharaoh found him, and educated him as her own son.

"Thus Moses became acquainted with all the learning of Egypt, and was mighty both in word and deed: but when he was forty years old he thought proper to visit his brethren, the children of Israel: and seeing an Egyptian smite an Hebrew, he assisted the suffering person, and slew the Egyptian; supposing that his brethren would have been persuaded that from his hand, with the assistance of the Almighty, they might expect deliverance; but they conceived no hopes of this kind.

"The next day he again visited them, and seeing two of them striving together, he endeavoured to make them friends: Ye are brethren, said he to them, why do ye injure one another? But he who did his neighbour wrong, instead of listening to his advice, thrust him away, saying, By what authority art thou a judge of our actions? wilt thou kill me as thou didst the Egyptian, yesterday?

"Moses, at this answer, fled from Egypt, and sojourned in the land of Media, where he begat two sons. And at the end of forty years, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, out of the middle of a bush burning with fire: this was a sight which surprized Moses; and as he drew near to view more attentively so uncommon a thing, God called unto him, saying, *I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.* At which Moses trembled, and turned aside his face. But the Lord said to him, *Put off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place where thou standest is holy ground. I have long seen the afflictions of my people which are in Egypt; I have heard their cries, and am now descended from heaven to deliver them. Come, therefore, I will send thee into Egypt.*

"Thus was that Moses whom they refused sent by God to be ruler and deliverer by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush. Accordingly he brought them out after he had shewed signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, in the Red sea, and in the wilderness, forty years. It is this Moses that told our fathers, *A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, and your brethren, like unto me. Him shall ye hear.*

"And this prophet is the same who was in the church in the wilderness, with the angel which spake unto Moses in Mount Sinai, and with our fathers: the same who received the lively oracles to give unto us: he whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and were desirous of returning to their state of bondage; commanding Aaron to make them gods to go before them; and pretending that they knew not what was become of Moses, who delivered them from the slavery of Egypt. They now made a calf, offered sacrifices to it, and rejoiced in the work of their own hands. From these idolatrous proceedings they lost that Divine protection which had hitherto attended them as the prophets have recorded. *O ye houses of Israel! have you offered unto me slain beasts and sacrifices, by the space of forty years in the wilderness? Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan; figures which ye made to worship them: I will carry you away beyond Babylon.*

"Our fathers were possessed of the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness; being made according to the pattern Moses had seen in the mount. This tabernacle our fathers brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, who were driven out by the Almighty, till the days of David, a favourite of the Most High, and who was desirous of finding a tabernacle for the God of Jacob; but Solomon built him an house.

"We must not, however, think, that the Almighty will reside in temples made with hands, as the prophet beautifully observed, *Heaven is my throne and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me, saith the Lord, or where is the place of my rest? Hath not mine hand made all these things?*

"Ye stiff-necked, ye uncircumcised in heart and ears, will ye for ever resist the Holy Ghost? Ye tread in the paths of your fathers; as they did, so do you still continue to do. Did not your fathers persecute every one of the prophets? did not they slay them who shewed the coming of the Holy One, whom ye yourselves have betrayed and murdered? Ye have received the law by the disposition of angels, but never kept it."

This speech, but particularly the conclusive part of it, incensed the council to such a degree against Stephen, that they made use of the most bitter invectives, and resolved to chastise him by no less a punishment than death. But Stephen was totally regardless of what they said or did, having his mind employed in the delightful prospect of heaven, and the appearance of the Blessed Jesus standing at the right hand of God. The visionary prospect of this heavenly scene so enraptured his soul, that he could not help communicating it to the council. *Behold,* (said he) *I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.* On saying these words, the resentment of the council against him was so ungovernably increased, that, raising a loud clamour, and stopping their ears against all cries for mercy, they immediately dragged him away without the city, and stoned him to death. Whilst Stephen was undergoing this punishment, he first devoutly recommended his soul to God, and then earnestly prayed for his murderers,

murderers, that the sin they were committing *might not be laid to their charge*; having done which he quietly resigned his soul into the hands of Him who gave it. His remains were decently interred by *devout men* (profelytes to the Christian faith) who *made great lamentation over him*.

Among the many that were enraged against Stephen, one particular person, who had but too great an hand in his death, was a young man of Cilicia, named Saul. This person, out of his great officiousness to have Stephen executed, undertook to look to the clothes of the witnesses, who usually stripped themselves to throw the first stones (as the law directed) at the person who was to suffer by their evidence. Not satisfied with this, Saul, out of his passionate concern for the traditions of the antients, and his natural inveteracy, on that account, against the advocates for the Gospel, resolved to persecute all he could who professed the new religion. He accordingly applied to the Sanhedrim for a commission for this purpose, which was no sooner

granted, than he immediately proceeded to carry it into execution. Having proper assistance, he broke open houses, seized upon all who looked like the disciples of Jesus, and unmercifully dragged them to prison, where he caused them to be scourged, and otherwise ignominiously punished. These acts of cruelty he exercised wherever he went; so that most of the believers, except the apostles, were forced to leave Jerusalem, and disperse themselves in the regions of Judea and Samaria, Syria and Phœnicia, Cyprus and Antioch, &c.

In consequence of this, the glad tidings of the Gospel, (which had, till now, been confined to Judea, and many professors of it obliged to hide themselves in secret places) was preached to the Gentile world, and an antient prophecy was fulfilled, which says, *Out of Sion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem*. Thus did the Almighty bring good out of evil, and cause the malicious intentions of the wicked to redound to his honour and praise.

C H A P. II.

Philip, the deacon, preaches the Gospel in Samaria with great success. One Simon, a magician, pretending to become a convert, is baptized by Philip. The apostles, hearing of Philip's success in Samaria, send Peter and John thither to confirm his doctrine. Simon the magician offers the apostles money to invest him with the power of working miracles; but Peter, knowing the iniquity of his heart, instead of complying with his request, severely rebukes him. Peter and John return to Jerusalem. Philip converts an eunuch belonging to the queen of Ethiopia. The miraculous conversion of Saul, the great persecutor of the profelytes in Judea. He preaches the Gospel at Damascus, for which the inhabitants seek his life, but he happily makes his escape. He goes to Jerusalem and is kindly received by the apostles. Proceeds from thence to Tarsus, and preaches the Gospel in Cilicia and Syria. Peter visits various parts of Judea, Galilee and Samaria. Cures one Æneas of a paralytic disorder, and raises a dead woman to life at Joppa. Is sent for by Cornelius, a Roman officer, whom he converts, with several other Gentiles. He returns to Jerusalem, and is censured by the Jewish converts there for his familiarity with the Gentiles. He justifies his conduct on this head, and acquits himself with satisfaction to his hearers.

AMONG those who fled from Jerusalem in consequence of the violent persecution by Saul, was Philip the deacon, the next in order after Stephen. He directed his course towards Samaria, preaching the Gospel at various places in his way, and at length took up his residence in that city. His labours here were crowned with success; he confirmed the doctrine he preached by the performance of many distinguished miracles, and in a short time, was attended by a prodigious number of converts. In the city lived a person named Simon, who, by his sorcery and magical arts, had so strangely gained the veneration of the people, that they considered his diabolical illusions as real operations of *the power of God*. Simon, seeing great numbers of his admirers fall off from him, and embrace the doctrine preached by Philip, pre-

tended to be a convert likewise, and (in hopes of obtaining some share of the miraculous gifts, which he could not but admire in Philip) was baptized by him with some others who had embraced the doctrine of Christ.

The great success which attended Philip at Samaria being made known to the apostles at Jerusalem, they sent Peter and John to confer the gifts of the Holy Ghost on the new converts. Simon, the magician, perceiving that a power of working miracles was consequent to all those on whom the apostles laid their hands, offered to give them money if they would invest him with a like power. But Peter, knowing the insincerity of his heart, rejected his offer with scorn and detestation; and severely rebuked him in words to this effect: "*Thy money* (said the great apostle) *perish with thee*. As thy heart is full
" of

“ of hypocrisy and deceit, thou shalt never be
 “ invested with any part of this Divine privilege,
 “ for thy design in desiring these gifts is, to ad-
 “ vance thy own credit and esteem among men,
 “ and not to enlarge the kingdom of Christ.
 “ Repent, therefore, and humble thyself before
 “ God for this wicked and impious proposal,
 “ that the thoughts of thy heart may be forgiven
 “ thee; for I perceive that thy temper and dis-
 “ position of mind is still vicious and corrupt;
 “ that thou art yet bound by the chains of ini-
 “ quity, and in a state displeasing to God, and
 “ dangerous to thyself.”

This severe rebuke from Peter greatly affected the mind of Simon: his conscience flew in his face, and he earnestly entreated the apostles to make intercession for him to the throne of grace, that the Almighty might pardon his sins, and not inflict on him those heavy judgments which Peter had intimated were likely to fall on him for his enormous transgressions.

The two apostles, having confirmed the doctrine preached by Philip in Samaria, left that city, and returned to Jerusalem, in their way to which they expounded the doctrine of Christ in several considerable villages, and were so successful, as to bring over a prodigious number of sincere profelytes.

Soon after Peter and John left Samaria, Philip received orders from an heavenly messenger to quit that city, and go Southward into the road which led from Jerusalem to Gaza. Philip immediately obeyed the Divine mandate; but he had not travelled far before he espied a chariot with a splendid retinue, which, on enquiry, he found belonged to an eunuch, the treasurer of Candace, queen of Ethiopia, who being a profelyte to the Jewish religion, had been to pay his devotions at Jerusalem, and was then upon his journey home. When Philip approached the chariot he was directed by the Spirit of God to stop and speak to the person within it. This he accordingly did, and found the treasurer commendably employed in reading a passage of the prophet Isaiah. Philip, after apologizing for interrupting him, asked if he clearly understood what he was reading; upon which the treasurer candidly acknowledged he did not, and besought him to get into the chariot and instruct him. Philip readily obeyed, and when he came to examine the passage which had so much perplexed, and engaged the attention of the treasurer, he found it to be the following: *He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and like a sheep dumb before the shearer he opened not his mouth; in his humiliation his judgment was taken away, and who shall declare his generation? For his life was taken from the earth.* This text the treasurer desired Philip to explain, asking him, whether the prophet spoke this of himself, or of some other person? Philip took this opportunity of preaching to him the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and clearly pointed out to him that not only the sense of the passage in question, but likewise several others in the antient prophets, was fully accomplished in his person, and the transactions that had taken place during his stay on earth.

While Philip was expounding the doctrine of Christ to the Ethiopian, they happened to come

to a piece of water by the road side; upon which the eunuch said, *See here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?* Philip said, *If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.* And he answered and said, *I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.* On this the eunuch ordered the chariot to stop, and both getting out and entering the water, Philip performed on him the ceremony of baptism. *And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Cesarea.* Acts viii, 39, 40.

In the mean time Saul was very active in persecuting the believers of Christ in Jerusalem and its neighbourhood; but such was his fiery zeal against the faithful, that he resolved to carry his cruelty and resentment still farther. He therefore applied to the Sanhedrim, and obtained a commission from that court to extend his persecution to Damascus, and to bring such believers as he might find in that city bound to Jerusalem.

Saul, pleased with the horrid power with which he was invested by the Sanhedrim, left Jerusalem, and prosecuted his journey towards Damascus, being fully resolved to execute his commission with the strictest severity. But it was the Divine will, in mercy to him as well as those he went to persecute, to frustrate his intentions. When he came near Damascus, a resplendent light, far exceeding the brightness of the sun, darted upon him, at which he was greatly amazed and confounded, falling, together with his horse, prostrate on the ground. This light was accompanied with a voice, in the Hebrew language, saying, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* To which Saul replied, *Who art thou, Lord?* He was immediately answered, *I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.* As if he had said, “ All thy attempts to extirpate the faith in me will prove abortive, and, like kicking against the spikes, wound and torment thyself.”

Saul was now sufficiently convinced of his folly in acting against Jesus, whom he was now assured to be the true Messiah. He therefore, trembling with fear, said, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* On which a voice replied, *Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.* Those who accompanied Saul were struck with fear and amazement, wondering that they should hear a voice, and yet see no man speak, whilst Saul himself was so dazzled and overpowered by the light, that he quite lost his eye-sight. His companions, therefore, led him by the hand into the city of Damascus, where he continued three days totally blind, nor did he, in the whole time, take the least refreshment.

At this time there dwelt in the city a certain disciple named Ananias, whom the Lord, in a vision, commanded to go and find out one Saul of Tarsus (then lodging at the house of one Judas, a Jew) and, by laying his hands on him, to remove his blindness. Ananias was startled at the name of the man, and, to excuse himself, alledged his violent persecutions of the church, and with what a wicked intent he was then come

to Damascus. But to this the vision told him; that he was appointed, by the Divine Being, to be a powerful instrument in the propagation of the Gospel, both among the Jews and Gentiles; and that, how much soever he had persecuted Christianity heretofore, he was now to become a zealous defender of it, and even to die in testimony of its truth.

Encouraged with this assurance, Ananias repaired to the house where Saul was, and, laying his hands on him, delivered a message to this effect: "That the Lord Jesus, who had appeared to him in his journey, had sent him not only to restore his eye-sight, but likewise to bestow upon him the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, such as might qualify him for the ministry to which he was then appointed." No sooner had Ananias finished his speech, than thick films, like scales, fell from Saul's eyes, and he received his sight; immediately after which he was baptized, and continued some days with the disciples at Damascus, preaching in the synagogues, and proving that Jesus was the Messiah.

After staying some time at Damascus, Saul retired into the neighbouring parts of Arabia Petraea, where he first planted the Gospel; and, in the beginning of the next year, returned to Damascus. Here he applied, with the utmost assiduity, to the great work of the ministry, preaching Christ daily in the synagogues, and confuting all those who argued against his doctrine. He was, indeed, remarkably zealous in his preaching, and blessed with a very extraordinary method of reasoning, whereby he undeniably proved the fundamental points of Christianity. This irritated the Jews to the highest degree; and at length, after about three years continuance in the city, they found means to prevail on the governor of Damascus to have him apprehended, and confined. But they knew it would be difficult to take him, as he had so many friends in the city: they therefore kept themselves in continual watch, searching all the houses where they thought he might conceal himself, and likewise obtained a guard from the governor, to attend the different gates of the city, in order to prevent his escape. In this distress his Christian friends were far from deserting him: they tried every method that offered to procure his escape; but finding it impossible for him to pass through either of the gates of the city, they let him down from one of their houses in a basket over the wall, by which means the cruel designs of his enemies were rendered abortive.

Saul, having thus escaped from his malicious persecutors in Damascus, repaired to Jerusalem, where, at first, he was but coolly received among many of the disciples. They were not insensible of his former conduct, and were therefore doubtful of the sincerity of his heart, till at length Barnabas, who was privy to the circumstances that had attended him both before and after his conversion, introduced him to the apostles, and, having clearly related to them every particular that had passed, they admitted him into their communion. He continued some time at Jerusalem, during which he preached with great boldness to the people; and his sermons were

so powerful, and disputations with his opponents so unanswerable, that they, like the Jews at Damascus, formed designs against his life. But as soon as this was known to the brethren, they conducted him to Cesarea, from whence he set sail to his own city Tarsus, and continued, for some years, preaching the Gospel with great success in various parts of Cilicia and Syria.

The church, at this time, was free from persecution, and flourished exceedingly; upon which Peter took the opportunity of making a general visitation to all the reformed places in Judea, Galilee and Samaria. In his progress he arrived at a town called Lydda, where he cured one Æneas of a paralytic disorder, which had confined him to his bed for eight years; and from this miracle all the inhabitants of Lydda (as well as a neighbouring town called Saron) were prevailed on to embrace the doctrine of Christ. From Lydda he was entreated by two messengers to go over to Joppa, a noted port about six miles distant, on account of one Tabitha, a Christian woman, venerable for her piety and diffusive charity, who was lately dead. Peter complied with the request of the messengers, and immediately accompanied them to Joppa. On his arrival at the house he found the body in an upper chamber ready prepared for interment, and surrounded by a number of mournful widows, who shewed him the coats and garments wherewith she had clothed them, the monuments of her liberality. They durst not, however, request him to raise her from the dead, but by their tears, and great commendations of her charity, sufficiently testified their wishes that he would do it. Peter was not insensible of their meaning, and was willing to grant what he knew would give them general satisfaction. Having, therefore, ordered them to withdraw, he first knelt down, and prayed for some time, with great fervency; after which, turning himself to the body, he said, *Tabitha, arise*. Upon this, the good woman instantly opened her eyes, and Peter, taking her by the hand, raised her up, and presented her alive to her friends and relations. This miracle gained Peter a prodigious number of converts, and encouraged him, for a considerable time, to continue his abode at Joppa, during which he resided in the house of one Simon a Tanner.

During his stay at Joppa, he one day retired to the top of the house, about noon, to pray. After he had finished his devotions he found himself hungry, and called for meat; but, while the people were preparing his dinner, he fell asleep, and beheld, in a vision, a large sheet, or table-cloth, let down, as it were, by the four corners from heaven, wherein were creatures of all kinds, clean and unclean; and, at the same time, a voice said to him, *Arise, Peter, kill and eat*. But the apostle, being tenacious of the rites and institutions of the Mosaic law, declared his aversion to such a proceeding; upon which the voice rejoined, that what God had pronounced clean, he ought by no means to account common or unclean. This representation was made to him three several times, after which the sheet was taken up, and the vision disappeared.

When Peter awoke he could not help seriously

ously reflecting on the vision he had beheld; and while he was wondering within himself what might be the event, he was interrupted by three messengers, who, knocking at the gate, desired to speak with him. They were accordingly admitted, and as soon as they saw Peter they acquainted him with their business, which was to the following purport: "That Cornelius, a Roman, captain of a company in the Italian Legion*, then at Cesarea, a person of eminent virtue, piety and charity, had, by an immediate command from God, sent to him, begging that he would return with them to give him some instructions on so important and singular an occasion." Peter detained the messengers that night; but the next day he set out with them, accompanied by some of his brethren, and the day following arrived at Cesarea.

Cornelius, being in expectation of his coming, had invited his friends and relations to his house, and as soon as Peter entered, he fell down at his feet to worship him: but the apostle, rejecting that honour as being due to God alone, raised him up, and then told the company, "That though they must know it was not lawful for a Jew to converse (more especially on the duties of religion) with those of another nation; yet, since God had taught him to make no distinction, he very readily attended their pleasure, and desired to know the occasion of their sending for him."

The reply Cornelius made in answer to this was to the following effect: "Four days ago, being fervently employed in the duties of fasting and prayer, an angel from the courts of heaven appeared to me, declaring that my prayers and alms were come up as memorial before the throne of the Most High; and at the same time ordered me to send to Joppa for one Simon Peter, who lodged in the house of a Tanner near the sea-side, and would give me farther information in the mysteries of salvation. Accordingly I made no hesitation to obey the heavenly messenger: I sent immediately for thee and now thou art come, and we are met together, I desire to hear what instructions thou hast to communicate."

From this relation of the Roman officer Peter delivered a discourse to the assembly, which he began by declaring, "that he perceived plainly God had made no distinction of persons and people, but that the pious and godly of all nations, were to meet with acceptance. He told them, that peace and reconciliation between God and man was a doctrine published by the prophets of old, and, of late, since the time of John the Baptist, preached through

"Galilee and Judea; that of this peace Jesus of Nazareth was the only Mediator between God and Man, as appeared by the Divine powers and graces wherewith he was invested, and which he constantly exercised in doing good to mankind; that of his life and actions, more especially of his Crucifixion by the Jews, and resurrection from the dead, of his appearing to his disciples, and even eating and drinking with them after his resurrection, he and the rest of the apostles were chosen witnesses; that from him they had received, before his ascension, a command and commission to publish to all nations, that he was the person, whom God had ordained to be the Great Judge of the world: that all the prophets, with one consent, bore witness of him; and that whoever believed in his name would certainly receive the remission of sins."

While Peter was thus speaking, the Holy Ghost came down upon the whole audience, and inspired them with gifts and graces, fitting them for several conditions in the church. The Jews who accompanied Peter, were greatly astonished to see that the gifts of the Holy Ghost were poured upon the Gentiles; which being observed by Peter, he told them he knew no reason why those persons should not be baptized (having received the Holy Ghost) as well as they. He accordingly gave orders that they should be baptized, which being done, he staid with them several days, in order to confirm them in the Holy Faith they had so happily and earnestly embraced.

The conduct of Peter on this occasion was considered in various lights by the brethren at Jerusalem, who being but lately converted to the Christian Faith, were zealously attached to the religious ceremonies of the Mosaic institution, and therefore most of them severely charged Peter, on his return to Jerusalem, as being too familiar with the Gentiles. How powerful is the prejudice of education! The Jews had, for many ages, conceived an inveterate hatred to the Gentiles, considering them as persons not approved of by the Almighty, who had chosen the Jews for his peculiar people. The law of Moses, indeed, enjoined them to be kind to their own nation, in preference to all others; and the rites and institutions of their religion, and the peculiar form of their commonwealth, rendered them very different from the inhabitants of other countries: a separation which in after ages they contracted into a much narrower compass. They were also tenaciously proud of their external privileges in being the descendants of Abraham; and therefore looked upon the rest of the world as reprobates,

* The Cohort of the Romans, which we call band, was a body of infantry, consisting of five hundred men, ten of which bands made a legion; and the manner in which the Romans distinguished and denominated their bands and legions was very various. Sometimes it was from the order of places, and so they were called the first or second band, according to their rank and precedency; Sometimes from the commanders they were under, as the Augustan and Claudian band, &c. because persons of that name did lead them: Sometimes from their own behaviour, as the Victrix, the Ferrea,

the conquering, the iron band, &c. by reason of the great valour, which, in some sharp engagements, these had shewn: Sometimes from the countries they were chiefly quartered in, as the German and Pannonian band, &c. and sometimes from the parts from whence they were gathered, as this of Cornelius, is called the Italian band, because it was raised out of that country, and was a body of forces well known for their gallantry and great exploits, among the writers of the Roman history.

reprobates, refusing to hold any conversation with them, or even to treat them with common civility.

It is therefore no wonder that they were highly displeased with Peter; nor would he, in all probability, have been able to have defended his conduct in a satisfactory manner, had he not been charged with a peculiar commission from God for extending the privileges of the Gospel to the Gentile world. To satisfy them, however, of the propriety of his conduct, he first gave them a plain and minute narrative of the whole affair, together with the occasion of it; and then took occasion from the whole, to draw this inference:

“ That, since God had been pleased to bestow
“ on these Gentiles the same privileges, and
“ marks of conversion, that he had done on his
“ select disciples, it would have been direct dis-
“ obedience in him to the Divine will, had he
“ denied them admission into the church, or re-
“ fused them his instructions and conver-
“ sation.”

From this representation the whole audience were perfectly satisfied; and their displeasure against Peter was turned into praise and thanksgiving to God, for having communicated the same mercy to the Gentiles as he had done to the Jews; namely, *repentance unto life eternal.*

C H A P. III.

Barnabas and Saul preach with great success at Antioch. Herod Agrippa, grandson of Herod the Great, persecutes the Christians, and orders James (the brother of John) to be put to death. He casts Peter into prison, from whence he is miraculously released by an angel. The miserable death of Agrippa. Saul and Barnabas preach the Gospel in Cyprus, where they convert the governor; and Saul changes his name to that of Paul. They go from Cyprus to Perga, Pisidia and Lystra. At the latter place Paul cures a lame man, from which incident he and Barnabas are reputed as Gods. Paul is stoned, but revives and returns to Antioch. He and Barnabas go from thence to Jerusalem, in order to settle a matter of controversy relative to circumcision. They return to Antioch, where he reproves Peter for the impropriety of his conduct. Paul and Barnabas disagree, part, and go different ways.

AFTER the general dispersion which took place in consequence of the martyrdom of Stephen, and the persecutions that followed, some disciples, who were born in Cyprus and Cyrene †, having travelled through several countries, and hitherto preached to the Jews only, at length came to Antioch ‡, where hearing of the conversion of Cornelius, and others, they applied themselves to the Greeks, who lived in that city, and, by the blessing of God, daily made great numbers of converts. Intimation of this being given to the apostles at Jerusalem, they dispatched one Barnabas, a pious man, and endued with many excellent gifts, to assist the disciples, and confirm the believers in that city.

The success of the Gospel in so large a place as Antioch, gave great satisfaction to Barnabas, who after continuing there some time, had exhorted the people to hold fast the possession of that faith they had newly embraced, departed from thence to Tarsus, in order to find out Saul, whom he considered, from the same he had heard of him, as a necessary person to assist him in facilitating the farther promulgation of the Gospel. Having found out Saul, he returned with him, in a short time, to Antioch, where, for the space of a whole year, they daily resorted to the most public places, preaching and expounding the doctrine of their Great Master; by means of which they soon gained over such a prodigious number

† This was a city of great note, and once of such power, as to contend with Carthage for some pre-eminences. It stood on the western parts of Lybia, (properly so called) and, as it was the principal city, it sometimes gave the name of Cyrenaica to the whole country, which by the sacred writer is paraphrastically called Lybia about Cyrene, Acts ii. 10. The city itself is famous in Holy Writ for being the birth-place of that Simon, whom the Jews compelled to bear Our Saviour's Cross.

‡ This Antioch, (to distinguish it from sixteen other cities, which, in Syria, and other countries, bore that name) was frequently called Antiochia Epidaphne, from its neighbourhood to Daphne, a village where the Temple of Daphne stood. It was built, as some say, by Antiochus Epiphanes; as others, by Seleucus Nicanor, the first king of Syria after A-

lexander the Great, in memory of his father Antiochus, and was, after that, the royal seat of the kings of Syria. In the flourishing times of the Roman empire it was the ordinary residence of the prefect, or governor of the eastern provinces, and was also honoured with the residence of many of the Roman emperors, especially of Verus and Valens, who spent here the greatest part of their time. As to its situation, it lay on both sides the river Orontes, about twelve miles distant from the Mediterranean Sea; was, in former times, adorned with many sumptuous palaces and stately temples, and both by Nature and Art fortified even to admiration; but, being taken by the Saracens, and afterwards by the Turks, it began to grow into decay, and has ever since been in a desolate and ruinous condition.

number of converts, that in this city the disciples of Jesus were first distinguished by the honourable name of Christians §.

The extensive circulation of the Gospel at Antioch opened an intercourse between the Christians of that city and those of Jerusalem. Many people resorted from the latter place to the former, and among them was one person named Agabus, who foretold, that there would shortly be a great famine in many parts of the Roman empire, which accordingly happened in the fourth year of the reign of the emperor Claudius. In consequence of this prophecy, the Christians of Antioch determined to make a collection for their brethren in Judea, which, on the approach of the dearth, they accordingly did, and sent it to the elders at Jerusalem by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

About this time Herod Agrippa (the grandson of Herod the Great) in order to ingratiate himself with the heads of the obstinate Jews, raised a most violent persecution against the Christians, in the commencement of which he ordered James, the son of Zebedee (and brother of John) commonly called *the Great* ||, to be put to death. Finding this cruel act was acceptable to the chief priests and rulers, he resolved to extend his cruelty to Peter. He accordingly caused him to be apprehended and put into prison, designing, immediately after the Feast of the Passover, to bring him forth to the Jews, and, if they desired it, to have him executed. But the Christians were incessant in their prayers to God for his safety; nor were their prayers and solicitations in vain. Herod was persuaded in his own mind, that he should soon accomplish his design, and sacrifice Peter to the insatiable cruelty of the Jews. But the night before this intended execution, a messenger from the courts of heaven visited the gloomy horrors of the dungeon, where he found Peter asleep between two of his keepers. The angel raised him up, and taking off his chains, ordered him to gird on his garments, and follow him. Peter obeyed, and having passed through the first and second watch, they came to the iron gate leading to the city, which opened to them of its own accord. The angel also accompanied him through one of the streets, and then departed. On this Peter (who had hitherto been confused, thinking all that had passed was no more than a dream) came to himself, and perceived that it was no vision, but that his great and beloved Master had really sent a messenger from above, and released him from prison. He therefore repaired to the house of Mary, the mother of John, surnamed Mark, where several disciples were met together, and sending up their prayers to heaven for his deli-

verance. As he stood knocking without, a maid-servant of the house, named Rhoda, knowing his voice, ran in, and acquainted the company that Peter was at the door. At first they would not pay any attention to what she said; but on her persisting in the truth of what she asserted, they concluded that it must have been his angel. Their doubts, however, were soon removed by the entrance of Peter, at the sight of whom they were all greatly astonished. Peter, beckoning them to hold their peace, related the whole particulars of his miraculous escape from prison, and, after ordering them to acquaint James, and the other brethren, with this good news, withdrew himself to a place of more retirement and security.

Early the next morning the officers went from Herod to the prison, with orders to bring Peter out to the people, who were gathered together to behold his execution. But when they came to the prison, they were informed by the keepers that Peter had made his escape. The officers immediately returned with this intelligence to Herod, who was so irritated at his being disappointed in his wicked design, that he commanded the keepers to be put to death, as supposing them accessory to his escape; after which he left Jerusalem, and retired to Cesarea.

While Herod was in Cesarea a misunderstanding took place between him and the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon, against whom he was about to declare war. But they, dreading his power, (and knowing that in this time of scarcity their country was in a great measure dependent on Herod's dominions for its support) sent ambassadors to Blastus, Herod's chamberlain, requesting him to intercede in their behalf, and, if possible, to bring about an accommodation. Though Herod was highly displeased with them, yet he so far listened to his chamberlain as to appoint a day for holding a public conference with the ambassadors; at which time, being dressed in his royal robes, and seated on a throne, he made a long harangue on the occasion. The fawning multitude, thinking to ingratiate themselves in his favour, and please the tyrant's pride with flattering applause, shouted out, *It is the voice of a god, and not of a man*. This gratified the pride of Herod, who, assuming to himself that praise which belonged only to God, was instantly struck by an angel with a mortification in his bowels, which, in a short time, put a period to his existence.

The tyrant Herod being thus removed, the Gospel greatly flourished and increased, new converts daily thronging to be admitted to the faith.

About this time Banabas and Saul, having discharged

§ Before this they were called among themselves *brethren, saints, disciples, believers, and those that called on the name of Christ*; and among their enemies, *Galileans, Nazarenes, and men of the sect*: but now, by the conversion of so many heathens, both in Cesarea and Antioch, the believing Jews and Gentiles being all made one church, this new name was given them, as being more expressive of their common relation to Christ, their great Lord and Master.

|| He is commonly called *the Great* to distinguish him from

another of the same name, who was bishop of Jerusalem, and called *the Less*. He had his first instruction, together with John, from the Baptist; but how he disposed of himself after Our Lord's ascension does not appear. That he was very zealous and industrious in propagating the Gospel, appears evident from Herod's making choice of him for the first sacrifice (after the death of Stephen) to the fury of the people.

discharged their trust in disposing of the contributions raised in Antioch for the benefit of the Christians in Jerusalem and Judea, returned to that city, taking with them John, surnamed Mark *, a person well calculated to assist them in the propagation of the Gospel.

Barnabas and Saul had not been long returned to Antioch, when God, by some particular inspiration, gave them to understand, that he had appointed them to carry his word into other places. This was likewise revealed to the members of the church then at Antioch, who, in consequence thereof, betook themselves to fasting and prayer; and Simeon, Lucius, and Manaen, (all of whom were endued with the spirit of prophecy) having laid their hands on them, sent them away, to preach the Gospel wherever they might be directed by Divine inspiration.

On their departure from Antioch they went first to Seleucia †, from whence they took shipping for Cyprus, and began their ministerial office in the city of Salamis ‡, where they preached in the synagogues, and employed Mark, who was of their company, in several offices of the church which they could not conveniently attend themselves.

From Salamis they proceeded to Paphos §, the residence of Sergius Paulus, the pro-consul, or governor of the island, a man of great wisdom and prudence, but unhappily seduced by the wicked artifices of Bar-jesus, an impostor, who stiled himself Elymas, or the magician. The governor being informed of the doctrine preached by Saul and Barnabas was desirous of hearing it, and therefore sent to them for that purpose. They accordingly attended, but while Saul was delivering a discourse to him and the company present, the forcerer (who stood by the pro-consul) used all the arguments he could to prevent his being converted to the faith. This being observed by Saul, he turned himself to the forcerer, and severely chastised him in words to this effect: "O thou vile forcerer! Like the devil, by whom thou workest, thou art an enemy to all goodness. Wilt thou persist in sorcery, in defiance of the faith of Christ, which comes

"armed with a much greater power of miracles than those to which thou falsely pretendest? Thou shalt soon feel the vengeance of heaven; for thou that perversely holdest out against the light of the Gospel, shalt lose thy sight, which, by the power of God, shall, for a time, be taken from thee." No sooner had Saul uttered these words than the forcerer was struck blind, and implored some of the company to conduct him to his habitation. This miracle convinced the pro-consul of the truth of the doctrine he had heard, and he immediately became a convert to the faith. And from this event it is supposed, by some, that Saul changed his name to that of Paul ||, which he ever after retained.

After staying some time in the island of Cyprus, Paul and his companions went to Perga in Pamphylia **, where Mark (not choosing any longer to prosecute so wandering a course of life) took his leave, and returned to Jerusalem.

From Perga they went to Antioch in Pisidia ††, where, going into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, they sat themselves down to hear the performance of Divine worship. After the lessons, one out of the law, and the other out of the prophets (it being the custom for the Jewish doctors to expound some part of the scripture for the instruction of the people) the chief persons of the assembly sent to Paul and his companions, to know whether either of them would preach a sermon of exhortation to the audience. This was an offer highly satisfactory to Paul, who, after intimating his acceptance of it, arose, and delivered a discourse to the people in words to this effect:

"Hearken, all ye descendants of Jacob, and ye that fear the Almighty, to the words of my mouth. The God of Israel made choice of our fathers, and loved them, when they had no city of their own to dwell in, but were strangers and slaves in Egypt, bringing them from thence with a mighty hand, and a stretched-out arm; fed them in the wilderness forty years, and would not suffer his anger to rise against them, though they often provoked him in the desert. On their arrival

* This person, who is sometimes called John-Mark, and at other times simply Mark, or John, is very frequently confounded with the Evangelist St. Mark. He was a cousin and disciple of Barnabas, and the son of a Christian woman called Mary, at whose house in Jerusalem the apostles and disciples often assembled.

† This city lay on the west, or rather a little north-west of the city of Antioch, upon the Mediterranean-sea, and was so called from Seleucus its founder.

‡ This was once a famous city in the isle of Cyprus, opposite to Seleucia, on the Syrian coast; and, as it was the first place in these parts where the Gospel was preached, it was, in the primitive times, made the See of the Primate, or Metropolitan of the whole island. In the reign of the emperor Trajan, it was destroyed by the Jews, and re-built, but, after that, being in the time of Herodius, sacked, and razed to the ground by the Saracens, it never recovered its former splendor, tho' out of its ruins is said to have arisen Famagusta, which was the chief place of the isle, when the Turks took it from the Venetians, in the year 1570.

§ Paphos was another city of Cyprus, lying on the western (as Salamis did on the eastern) track of the island. It was once famous for having in it a celebrated temple dedicated to Venus, who, from thence is called, by antient wri-

ters, the Paphian Queen.

|| It is very observable, that, all along, before this circumstance of the Apostle's life, St. Luke calls him by the name of Saul, but ever after by that of Paul. From hence some imagine, that he assumed that name to himself, in memory of his converting of Sergius Paulus; just as the antient Roman generals were accustomed to adopt the names of the provinces which they conquered. St. Austin, more than once, asserts, that he took it from a principle of humility, by a small variation changing his former name (whereby a proud haughty king of Israel was called) into that of Paulus, which signifies *little*; and that, in conformity to this, he calls himself *less than the least of the apostles*. But the most rational account of the matter seems to be that of Origen, viz. that he, being of Jewish parentage, and born in Tarsus, a Roman city, had, at his circumcision, two names given him, Saul, a Jewish, and Paul, a Roman name, and that when he preached to the Jews, he was called by his Jewish, and when to the Gentiles (as he did chiefly after this time) by his Roman name.

** Pamphylia was a province of the Lesser Asia, not far from Cyprus.

†† This lay a little to the north of Pamphylia.

arrival in the land he promised their fathers, he destroyed the nations that inhabited it, and placed them in that fruitful country; dividing it to them by lot.

"When they were settled in the land he gave them judges during four hundred and fifty years, till Samuel the prophet. But on their desiring a king, he placed over them Saul the son of Cis, a Benjamite, who reigned about forty years. After his death he placed David on the throne of Israel, giving him this testimony, *I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.* And according to his promise the Almighty hath raised up to the sons of David a Saviour Jesus, *which is Christ the Lord*; the Baptism of repentance having been preached before his coming by John. And as his fore-runner executed his office, he asked his followers, *whom think ye that I am?* You must not mistake me for the Messiah; he will soon follow me: but I am not worthy to perform the meanest office for him.

"To you, therefore, ye descendants of Abraham, and all others who fear the Almighty, *is this word of salvation sent.* For the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and rulers of Israel, being ignorant of him, and the voices of the prophets, though read every sabbath in their synagogues, fulfilled their predictions by condemning the immaculate son of the Most High. They found, indeed, no fault in him, though they earnestly desired Pilate that he might be slain.

"When every thing that had been written by the prophets concerning him was fulfilled, they took him from the tree, and deposited his body in the chambers of the grave. But death had no power to detain him: his Almighty Father raised him from the habitations of the dead. After which, he was seen during many days by his disciples who attended him from Galilee, and were the witnesses chosen by Omnipotence, of these great and miraculous works. And we now declare unto you glad tidings, namely, That the promise made by the Almighty to our forefathers, he hath performed to us their children by raising Jesus from the dead. The prophet David also said, *Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee.* He also foretold, that he should return from the chambers of the dust, and no more be subject to corruption: *I will give you, (said he) the sure mercies of David.* And again, *Thou shalt not suffer thine holy one to see corruption.* Now this prophecy must relate to the Messiah, for David himself, after he had swayed the sceptre of Israel a certain time, died, was deposited in the chambers of the grave, and his flesh saw corruption: but the great son of David, whom the Almighty raised from the dead, never saw corruption.

"Be it therefore known unto you, men and brethren, that through this Saviour is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. It is by his merits we are justified from all things, which was impossible by the law of Moses. Be careful, therefore, lest what was foretold by the prophets come upon you, *Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which you shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.*"

This discourse was so well received by great numbers of the people, that when they got out of the synagogue, they besought Paul that he would deliver it again on the next sabbath. Paul promised to comply with their request, which he accordingly did, and on that day almost all the inhabitants of the city flocked to hear him. This irritated such of the Jews as were strong enemies to the Gospel: nor could they refrain from shewing their malice on the occasion. They several times not only interrupted, but peremptorily contradicted Paul while he was preaching, and at length uttered many blasphemous expressions against the name of Jesus of Nazareth. But their opposition could not daunt the apostles, who boldly answered them as follows: *It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.*

When the Gentiles heard this, they were greatly rejoiced, and glorified the name of God for his beneficent mercy revealed in the Gospel; and all who had any care or thought of the life to come immediately embraced the doctrine of Christ. This increased the malice and fury of the Jews, who, by false and artful insinuations, prevailed on some of the more bigotted and honourable women to bring over their husbands to their party: the consequence of this was, that Paul and Barnabas were driven out of the city, on leaving which they shook the dust off their feet, in testimony of the sense they had of the ingratitude and infidelity of their oppressors.

From Antioch Paul and Barnabas went to Iconium †, where they entered into the synagogue of the Jews, and, according to their usual custom, preached to the people; the consequence of which was, that many, both Jews and Greeks, became profelytes to the Christian religion. From this success the two apostles continued some time at Iconium, during which the number of converts daily increased, and to confirm them in the faith, God added his testimony to their preaching, by enabling them to work miracles. But though they had gained a considerable number

† This was the chief city of Lycaonia, a small province of Asia Minor, lying on the north-east of Pisidia, and bounded on the south by Pamphylia and Cilicia. It is said, by Strabo, to have been well built, and situated in the richest part of the province. This is confirmed by that celebrated modern historian and geographer Mr. Middleton, who says, "Iconium is situated in the antient Lycaonia, in a fertile plain, near a fine large lake of fresh water, which was antiently called Palus Toogilis. The city is surrounded

"by strong walls, adorned with towers, and the whole is enclosed by a broad and deep ditch. The Turks only inhabit the city. The Greeks, Armenians and Jews dwell in the suburbs, which are exceeding spacious. The city is defended by a small castle, and in it are several mosques, with some spacious caravanseras (or places of entertainment) for the accommodation of such caravans and travellers as pass through the town."

ber of inhabitants to the faith, yet there were many who continued in their infidelity: the whole leaven of Jewish malice began again to shew itself, and the unbelieving Jews, having stirred up the Gentiles against the apostles, at length prevailed on the multitude to stone them. But the apostles, having timely notice of their design, fled from the city to Lystra and Derbe, (two other cities in the province of Lycaonia) where they preached the Gospel to the inhabitants, as also to those who dwelt in the countries adjoining.

While they were at Lystra an happy circumstance occurred both for the promulgation of the Gospel, and the conversion of a people who had greatly been devoted to paganism. As Paul was one day preaching to the multitude, he saw amongst them a man who had been lame from his mother's womb, and had never walked. From the earnest attention which the cripple gave to the discourse, Paul (who had, for some time, taken particular notice of him) perceived that he had faith, and therefore thought proper to add the cure of his body to that of his soul, knowing that it would not only be beneficial to him, but would likewise confirm the faith of all those who should believe in his doctrine. And that the miracle might be wrought in the most conspicuous manner, Paul, in the midst of the congregation, said, in an audible voice, to the man, *Stand upright on thy feet*; which words were no sooner pronounced than he arose, *and leaped and walked*.

The people who beheld this miracle well knew that it could not be wrought by any human power; but having been initiated in the superstitious customs of the heathens, they cried out, *The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men*. Accordingly, they called Barnabas Jupiter, on account of his venerable gravity, and Paul they named Mercurius, *because he was the chief speaker*.

It was not long before the fame of this miracle was spread throughout the city, in consequence of which almost all the inhabitants gathered themselves together, and, preceded by the priest of Jupiter, and oxen dressed in garlands, went to the house where the apostles resided, intending to offer sacrifice before them. But as soon as Paul and Barnabas understood their intentions, they were greatly affected at their superstitious design; and, renting their clothes to express their grief and abhorrence of the action, ran out to the multitude, whom Paul addressed in words to this effect: "Ye men of Lystra, ye are mistaken in the object of your worship; for though we have done many miracles in the name, and by the power of Christ, yet we are no more than men, and subject to the same passions with yourselves, and preach unto you the glad tidings of salvation, that ye may forsake the vanities of this world, and return to the living God, who created the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all the creatures they contain. This Omnipotent Being suffered all nations formerly to walk in their own ways, though he never left himself without witness, doing the greatest good to the children of

"men; it is He that sendeth rain from heaven, and crowneth the year with fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with joy and gladness."

This argument had the desired effect, the people, (though with some difficulty) being persuaded to lay aside their idolatrous intentions. And surely no argument could be more properly adapted to answer the wishes of the inspired preacher. Is it possible that any human being can survey the several parts of the creation, and not discover, in every place, evident traces of an infinite wisdom, power and goodness? Who can survey universal nature, and not at once see and admire its great Author, who has disposed of all created things with such order and regularity, as to display, in the clearest manner, his own power and glory? Behold the sun! how justly is that source of light and heat placed in the center of the planetary choir, that each may enjoy its destined share of its prolific beams; so that the earth is not burnt by a too near approach, nor chilled by the northern blasts from too great a recess, but impregnated with fruits and flowers, by the happy influence of a vital heat, and crowned with luxuriant plenty by the benign influences of the season. Who can contemplate the wonderful properties of the air, and not reflect on the Divine wisdom that formed it? If we survey the earth, we there discover the footsteps of an Almighty Being, who hath filled it with a great variety of admirable and useful creatures, all of which are maintained by the bounty of his hand. It is he that clothes the grass with a delightful verdure, that *crowns the year with his loving kindness*, and causes *the valleys to stand thick with corn*. It is he that *maketh the grass to grow upon the mountains, and herbs for the service of man*. He adorns the lilies of the field that neither toil nor spin, with a glory that excels the pomp and grandeur of Solomon's court. *He shut up the sea with doors*, and said, *Hitherto shalt thou come and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed*. It is the Almighty Being that arrests the storm, and smooths the tempestuous billows of the deep; that delivereth the mariner from all his troubles, and bringeth his ship into the desired haven of safety. How reasonable, therefore, is it that we should worship and adore this Omnipotent, this kind Creator, and not transfer the honours due to him alone to frail mortals, much less to dumb idols, the work of men's hands!

After Paul had performed the miracle on the lame man, he and Barnabas continued to persevere in the execution of their important commission, declaring, wherever they went, the glad tidings of salvation to all who believed in the doctrine of Christ. But the malice of their enemies still pursued them: some inveterate Jews, who had come from Antioch and Iconium, so exasperated and stirred up the multitude against them, that they took Paul, whom, just before, they would have adored, and stoned him; after which they dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. But when the disciples went to the place where he was (probably to inter his body) he rose up, and went into the city

§ This circumstance strongly confirmed the faith of his new

converts, who all supposed that he was dead. His recovery mult

city for that night, and the next day departed, with Barnabas, to Derbe, where they preached the Gospel, and converted many to the faith.

They did not, however, continue long at Derbe, but returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, confirming the Christians of those places in the faith, earnestly persuading them to persevere, and not be discouraged at those troubles and persecutions which they must expect would attend the profession of the Gospel. And that the affairs of the church might be conducted with more regularity, they ordained elders and pastors, to teach, instruct, and watch over them; having done which, they left them to the protection of the Almighty, to whose care they recommended them by prayer and fasting.

From Antioch they passed through Pisidia, and from thence went to Pamphylia; and, having preached to the people at Perga, they went down to Attalia, and returned, by sea, to Antioch in Syria, from whence they had set out on this holy expedition. On their arrival here, they immediately assembled the church together, and, having given an account of their success, what miracles God had wrought by their hands, and a large *door of faith*, he, by their ministry, had opened to the Gentiles, they suspended their farther travels for the present, and, for a considerable time, took up their abode with the disciples in that city.

During their stay here, the church was greatly disturbed by means of some persons coming from Judea, who taught the people that there was no salvation without circumcision, and the observance of other legal ceremonies. This doctrine was strongly opposed by Paul and Barnabas; in consequence of which, after many conferences and disputations it was at length proposed, that the decision of the matter should be referred to the general assembly of the apostles at Jerusalem. This the whole church readily agreed to; and having deputed Barnabas and Paul, together with some others, to go with the message, they conducted them part of the way, and the two apostles, in passing through Phœnicia and Samaria, took care to relate what success they had met with in the conversion of the Gentiles, to the great joy and comfort of all the brethren in those parts.

On their arrival at Jerusalem they were kindly received by the apostles and elders of the church, to whom, after reciting the great success they had met with in the propagation of the Gospel, they delivered the message on which they were sent. They told them, that when the Gentile proselytes, or others uncircumcised, came in to the faith, some Jewish converts, of the sect of the Pharisees, said, that such could not be admitted into the church of Christ without circumcision; that great disputes had arisen on this head, and that the matter was referred to the church at Jerusalem.

In consequence of this intelligence a council was immediately summoned to deliberate on the matter, and great disputes took place on the occasion. At length Peter, rising from his seat, addressed the audience in words to this effect: "It is well known to you all, that some time since God made choice of me first to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles; and God, who knew the sincerity of their hearts, testified that they were acceptable to him and fit to be baptized, bestowing on them the gift of the Holy Ghost, as he had before upon us, making no difference between us and them. By this one act the matter is already sufficiently determined. Why, then, do ye press this thing so contrary to the will of God? and why would ye wish to impose on the Gentile converts the performance of the Mosaic law, which belonged not to them, and which we Jews were so far from being able to perform, that our conduct could not be justified? It is from the Gospel that we expect salvation and justification, through faith and obedience to Christ, and not by an observation of the Mosaic law: from whence it is plain, that if the Gentiles believe, they have the same way to salvation as ourselves."

When Peter had concluded his observations, Paul and Barnabas, in confirmation of what he had said, declared what miracles God had done by them in the conversion of the Gentiles, which, they said, was another argument and testimony from heaven, that no difference ought to be made between them and the Jews.

Upon this James (who was then bishop of Jerusalem and president of the council) stood up, and spoke to this effect: "Men and brethren, Peter hath sufficiently demonstrated that it was the will of God the Gentiles should, without scruple, have the Gospel preached to them, and be baptized. And this is agreeable to what hath been foretold by the old prophets, particularly Amos: *In the later days I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.* Wherefore it is my conclusion and determination, that we should not compel those to be circumcised, who from Gentiles turn Christians, but content ourselves if they believe. We who are Jews need not fear that this will bring a contempt upon Moses or the laws of the Jews, since the contrary appears by the Christian practice; for even where those proselytes of the Gentiles are, the books of Moses are continued among them, being read in the synagogues every sabbath-day, to signify their respect to the law."

The determination of the bishop of Jerusalem

must have evidently appeared miraculous, approaching, as near as can be conceived, to a *resurrection from the dead*. That it arose from a superior power was undeniably demonstrable, by his going the next day to Derbe, which was a

considerable distance, and which he could not have done without the interposition of Divine Providence, because, in the common course of nature, he would more sensibly have felt his bruises than when he first received them.

lem being unanimously agreed to, it was next resolved to send some proper persons with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch, in order that they, having been present, might give a satisfactory account of the result of the apostles' embassy. They accordingly made choice of two, namely, Judas, surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, men of distinguished reputation, and well respected by all Christians. These, accompanied by Paul and Barnabas, proceeded to Antioch, taking with them a decree drawn up by the council, the substance of which was to this effect: "The apostles, bishops of Judea, and the whole society of Christians in Jerusalem, salute the church of the Gentiles which is in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia. We having received an account, that some of the Judaizing Christians who went from hence endeavoured to subvert you, and lead you to a groundless new doctrine of the necessity of all Christians being circumcised, they having no instructions from us so to do, We have decreed in council to send two of our own bishops to accompany Barnabas and Paul, persons who have, in preaching the Gospel, behaved themselves with all sincerity, and hazarded their lives in the service of Christ. We have sent these, that they may tell you by word of mouth more at large our determination relative to the business on which you sent Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem. Having prayed to God to send his Holy Spirit to abide among us, and lead us to all truth, we have determined, that the Gentile Christians shall not be obliged to circumcision, or other Judaical observances, or to any more than those few things that have among the Jews been required of all profelytes; namely, that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: which things, if ye shall observe, there will be no more of the Mosaic law required of you, particularly circumcision shall not. Farewell."

With this decree they immediately repaired to Antioch, whither they had no sooner arrived, than the Christian converts, both Jews and Gentiles, assembled together in order to know the issue of their embassy. As soon as they were met, Paul and Barnabas presented to them the decretal epistle, which they caused to be read in the hearing of the whole congregation. The contents of the decree, which were ultimate, gave the highest satisfaction to the Gentile converts, who greatly rejoiced at finding themselves discharged from the burthen of the law, and confirmed in their Christian liberty.

While Judas and Silas were at Antioch, (being both men of excellent gifts in the interpretation of the scriptures) they employed their time in confirming believers in the truth of Christianity, and, after a short stay, were, with all kindness and civility, dismissed by the church,

in order to return to Jerusalem: But Silas, for some reasons, was unwilling to depart so soon, choosing rather to tarry with Paul and Barnabas. This he accordingly did, and those three, together with several others of the brethren, employed themselves in instructing such as had already received the Christian faith, and in preaching to others who had not yet embraced it.

Soon after the determination of the council at Jerusalem, Peter went from thence to Antioch, where, using the liberty, which the Gospel had given him, he, for some time, conversed familiarly with the Gentile converts, eating with them, and living with them in the same manner they did. This he had been taught to do by the vision of the sheet let down from heaven: this had been lately decreed at Jerusalem: this he had before practised with regard to Cornelius and his family, and justified the action to the satisfaction of his brethren: this he had likewise done after his arrival at Antioch, till some Jewish Christians (still tenacious of the ceremonial law) coming thither from Jerusalem, Peter, fearful of offending or displeasing them, withdrew himself from the Gentiles, as if it had been unlawful for him to hold conversation with uncircumcised persons; notwithstanding he knew, and was fully satisfied, that Our Blessed Saviour had broken down the wall of partition between the Jew and Gentile.

Peter, by thus acting against the light of his own mind and judgment, condemned what he had approved, and destroyed the superstructure he had before erected: at the same time he confirmed the Jewish zealots in their gross errors, filled the minds of the Gentiles with scruples, and their consciences with fears.

Paul, who was not ignorant of what pernicious influence the example of so great an apostle might be (especially when he saw Barnabas carried away with the stream of his indiscretion) was greatly irritated at his conduct, and, in the presence of the whole church, severely rebuked him, for endeavouring to impose that yoke on the Gentiles, which he, though a Jew, thought himself at liberty to shake off.

A few days after this Paul and Barnabas resolved to leave Antioch, and visit those places in which they had some time before planted Christianity among the Gentiles. In this intended excursion Barnabas proposed taking with them John Mark; but the proposition was highly disapproved of by Paul, on account of Mark's having deserted them at Pamphylia. In consequence of this, a warm dispute took place between them, the issue of which was, that they determined to separate*. Accordingly, Barnabas, accompanied by Mary, went to Cyprus, which was his native country; and soon after Paul having chosen Silas for his companion, set out on his intended visitation of the several places, in which he had before propagated Christianity.

C H A P.

* From hence we may learn, not only, that these great lights in the Christian Church were Men of the like passions with us, but that God, upon this occasion, did most eminently illustrate the wisdom of his providence, by rendering the frailties of two such eminent servants instrumental to the

benefit of his church, since both of them thenceforward employed their extraordinary industry and zeal, singly and apart, which till then had been united, and confined to the same places.

C H A P. IV.

Paul travels through various countries, accompanied by Silas and Timothy. They go to Philippi, where Paul ejects a spirit of divination, for which he and Silas are first scourged, and then put in prison, but afterwards honourably dismissed. Paul meets with great opposition at Thessalonica, upon which he goes to Berea, and from thence to Athens, where he preaches and disputes with the people of that city. He goes from Athens to Corinth, from whence he writes his first epistle to the Thessalonians. Makes some converts, but is greatly opposed by the Jews. Writes his second Epistle to the Thessalonians. Goes from Corinth to Ephesus, and, after staying there a short time, proceeds to Jerusalem, in order to celebrate the feast of the Passover. Returns from thence to Ephesus, where he baptizes several converts, confers on them the Spirit of the Holy Ghost, and performs many astonishing miracles. Seven brothers, who are exorcists, attempt to imitate Paul, but are severely punished for their presumption. The travels of Peter, with the contents of his first Epistle to the converted Jews.

WHEN Paul left Antioch, after his separation from Barnabas, he and his companion Silas travelled over the provinces of Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches, and leaving with each a copy of the synodical decree, which, a short time before, had been passed by the council at Jerusalem. From these parts they sailed to Crete †, where Paul propagated the Gospel, and constituted Titus bishop and pastor of the island, leaving him to settle those affairs of the church, which time would not permit the apostle to do.

From Crete Paul and Silas returned to Cilicia, and from thence went to Lystra. Here they met with a young man named Timothy, whose father was a Greek, but his mother a Jewish convert, by whom he had been brought up under all the advantages of a pious and religious education, especially with regard to the Holy Scriptures, which he had studied with the greatest assiduity and success. This person Paul designed as a companion of his travels, and a special instrument in the ministry of the Gospel. But knowing that his being uncircumcised would prove a stumbling-block to the Jews, he caused him to

be circumcised; being willing, in lawful and indifferent matters, to conform himself to the tempers and dispositions of all, that he might thereby farther succeed in his ministry, and the sooner establish that doctrine he was sent to propagate.

After staying a short time at Lystra, they passed through Phrygia ‡ and Galatia §, where the apostle Paul was entertained with the greatest kindness and veneration by the people, who looked upon him as an angel sent immediately from heaven. From hence he intended to have continued his progress through the proconsular Asia, but was prohibited from so doing by a particular revelation. In consequence of this he went to Mysia ||, and after attempting in vain to go into Bithynia **, proceeded to Troas ††, where soon after his arrival he had a vision, commanding him to direct his course for Macedonia ‡‡. Paul made immediate preparations for obeying these orders, being fully assured it was the Lord who had called him to preach the Gospel in that country.

Paul and his companions, having embarked at Traos, sailed to the island of Samothracia §§, and, the next day, landed at Neapolis ||| a port in

† This was one of the richest and best islands in the whole Mediterranean Sea. It is said, at one time, to have contained no less than an hundred considerable towns or cities, from whence it had the name of Hecatompolis. From the goodness of the soil, and temperature of the air, it was likewise siled Macorios, or the Happy Island. At present it is commonly called Candia, from its principal town, which bears that name. It is situated opposite the mouth of the Ægean Sea, or Archipelago; and, while it continued in the hands of the Venetians, was an archbishop's see; great, rich and populous; but, since it came into the possession of the Turks (which was in the year 1669) it has lost all marks of its former grandeur.

‡ Phrygia is a province of Asia Minor, having Bithynia to the north, Galatia to the east, Lycia to the south, and Mysia to the west. The inhabitants of this country (who are said to have been the inventors of augury and other kinds of divination) were antiently more superstitious than the other Asiatics, as appears from the rites which they used in the sacrifices of Cybele, and other heathen goddesses.

§ Galatia is a province of Asia Minor, bounded on the west by Phrygia, on the east by the river Halys, on the

north by Paphlagonia, and on the south by Lyconia.

|| Mysia is another small province of Asia Minor, bounded on the east by Phrygia, on the west by Troas, on the north by Bithynia, and on the south by the river Hermus.

** Bithynia is likewise a region of Asia Minor, and received its name from one of its kings, named Bythinus; but in what age he reigned we are not informed.

†† Troas was a small country belonging to Phrygia Minor, and situated to the west of Mysia, upon the Hellespont. It took its name from its principal city, which was a sea-port, and situated about four miles from old Troy.

‡‡ This is a large province in Greece, and was antiently called Emmathia, but, from the kings of Macedon, it was afterwards called Macedonia, which name it has ever since retained.

§§ Samothracia is a small island in the Ægean Sea, lying to the west of Troas, opposite the coast of Thrace, from whence it received its name.

||| Neapolis was a sea-port, and stood very near to Thrace. At first it belonged to that province, but was afterwards taken into Macedonia.

in Macedonia, from whence they travelled to Philippi*, a Roman colony, where they continued some days.

At a small distance from Philippi the Jews had a *proseuche*, or place of devotion, which was much frequented by the devout women of their religion, who met there to pray and hear the law. In this place Paul and his companions preached the glad tidings of the Gospel, and, by the influence of the Holy Spirit, made many converts. Among these was a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple in Philippi, but a native of Thyatira, whom they baptized, with her whole family; in return for which she invited them to lodge in her house during their abode in that city.

As Paul and his companions were one day going, as usual, to the before-mentioned place of devotion, they were met by a certain damsel, who was possessed with a spirit of divination, by means of which her masters acquired considerable advantage. This woman followed Paul and his companion, crying out, *These men are the servants of the Most High God, which shew us the way of salvation.* Paul, at first, took no notice of her, not being willing to multiply miracles without necessity. But when he saw her following them several days together, he began to be troubled; and therefore, in imitation of his great Master, (who would not suffer the devil to acknowledge him, lest his false and lying tongue should prejudice the truth in the minds of men) commanded the spirit, in the name of Jesus, to come out of her. Accordingly, the evil spirit obeyed, and at that instant left the damsel.

This miraculous cure proving a great loss to her masters, (who had acquired large sums from her soothsaying) they were vehemently incensed against the apostles. They therefore caused Paul and Silas to be apprehended and carried before the magistrates of the city, to whom they accused them of introducing many innovations, which were prejudicial to the state, and unlawful for them to comply with, as being Romans.

The magistrates, being concerned for the tranquillity of the state, and fearful of all disturbances, were very forward to punish the offenders, against whom the multitude testified; and therefore they commanded the officers to strip them, and scourge them severely as seditious persons. This was accordingly done, after which they were committed to close custody, and the jailer, having received a strict charge to keep them in the utmost security, not only thrust them into the inner prison, but likewise made their feet fast to the stocks.

But neither the obscure dungeon, nor the pitchy mantle of the night, can intercept the beams of Divine joy and comfort from the souls

of pious men. Their minds were all serenity; and at midnight they prayed, and sung praises to God so loud, that they were heard in every part of the prison. Nor were their prayers offered to the throne of grace in vain: an earthquake shook the foundations of the prison, opened the doors, loosed the chains, and set the prisoners at liberty.

This convulsion of nature roused the jailor from his sleep; and concluding, from what he saw, that all his prisoners were escaped, he was going to put a period to his life, which being observed by Paul, he hastily called out, *Do thyself no harm, for we are all here.* The keeper was as much surprized at this as he had been before terrified at the thoughts of their escape; and calling for a light, he went immediately into the presence of Paul and Silas, fell down at their feet, took them from the dungeon, brought them to his own house, washed their stripes, and then besought them to instruct him in the knowledge of that God who was so mighty to save. Paul readily granted his request, telling him, that, if he believed in Jesus Christ, he and his whole house might be saved. Accordingly the jailor, with all his family, were, after a competent instruction, baptized, and received as members of the Christian church.—How happy a change does the doctrine of the Gospel make in the minds of men! How does it smooth the roughest tempers, and instil in their minds the sweetest principles of civility and good-nature! He, who but a few moments before tyrannized over Paul and Silas with the most cruel usage, now treated them with the greatest respect, and shewed them the highest marks of kindness.

Early the next morning the magistrates (either having heard what had happened, or reflecting on what they had done as too harsh and unjustifiable) sent their sergeant to the jailor, with orders immediately to discharge Paul and Silas. The jailor joyfully delivered the message, and bade them *depart in peace*: but Paul, in order to make the magistrates sensible what injury they had done them, and how unjustly they had punished them without examination or trial, refused to accept of their discharge, alledging, “that they were not only innocent persons, but denizens of Rome; that, as they had been illegally scourged and committed to prison, their delivery should be as public as was the injury, and attended with a solemn retraction of what they had done.”

The magistrates were greatly terrified at this message, well knowing how dangerous it was to provoke the formidable power of the Romans, who never suffered any free man to be beaten uncondemned. They therefore went to the prison, and very submissively entreated them to de-

part

* Philippi was one of the chief cities of Macedonia, lying to the west of Neapolis. It was originally called Dathos, but afterwards took its name from Philip, the famous king of Macedon, who repaired and beautified it. In process of time it became a Roman colony, and the inhabitants enjoyed the privileges of Roman citizens, and were governed by the Roman laws. These indulgences were con-

ferred on them both by Julius and Augustus Cæsar, very probably, in memory of the two great battles that were fought in the plains adjacent, the first between Julius and Pompey the Great, and the second between Augustus and Mark Antony on the one side, and Cassius and Brutus on the other.

part without any farther disturbance. This small recompence for the cruel usage they had received was accepted by the meek followers of the Blessed Jesus: they accordingly left the prison, and retired to the house of Lydia, in which were a great number of converts. To those they related all that had passed, and after some conference with them, they took their leave and departed.

From Philippi Paul and his companions travelled towards the west, till they arrived at Thessalonica †, the metropolis of Macedonia. Here Paul preached in the synagogues of the Jews three sabbath-days successively, proving, from the predictions of the Old Testament, that the Messiah was to suffer, and to rise again; and that the Blessed Jesus was the Messiah spoken of by the prophets. Some of his hearers, among whom were several women of rank and quality, believed, and were converted to the faith, but the greater part of the Jews disapproved of his doctrine.

During their stay at Thessalonica, they lodged in the house of a certain Christian named Jason, who entertained them very courteously. But the Jews, in general, were so incensed against them, that they would not suffer them to continue at rest. They refused to embrace the Gospel themselves, and therefore envied its success, and determined to oppose its progress. Accordingly they gathered together a great number of lewd and wicked people, who beset the house of Jason, intending to take Paul, and deliver him up to an incensed multitude. But in this they were disappointed, he, with his companions, being removed from thence by the Christians, and concealed in some other part of the city. This disappointment increased their rage, and they determined to be revenged on Jason, who had concealed them. Accordingly they seized him, with some others of the brethren, and carried them before the magistrates of the city, accused them with disturbing the peace of the empire, and setting up Jesus as a king, in derogation of the emperor's dignity and authority. In consequence of this accusation both the people and magistrates became their enemies; and though Jason was only accused of harbouring Paul and his companions, yet the magistrates could not be prevailed on to dismiss Jason and his brethren till they had given security for their future appearance.

As soon as the tumult was over, those Thessalonians who had been converted sent away Paul and his companions, by night, to Berea, a city

about fifty miles to the south of Thessalonica. Here also Paul's great love for his countrymen the Jews, and his earnest wishes for their salvation, excited him to preach to them in particular. Accordingly, he entered into their synagogue, and explained the Gospel to them, proving, from the scriptures of the Old Testament, the truth of the doctrine he advanced. The Jews here were of a more ingenuous and candid temper than those of Thessalonica; and as they heard him, with great reverence and attention, expound the scriptures, so they searched diligently, whether his proofs were proper and pertinent, and consonant to the sense of the text to which he referred. Having done this, and found every thing agreeable to what Paul had advanced, many of them believed; and some Gentiles (among whom were several women of quality) following their example, became obedient to the faith. The news of this remarkable success being carried to Thessalonica, the Jews of that place were so incensed that great numbers went to Berea, and raised tumults in that city; in consequence of which Paul, to avoid their fury, was obliged to leave the place, but Silas and Timothy, who, perhaps, were either less known, or less envied, remained behind.

Paul, leaving Berea under the conduct of certain guides, it was imagined that he designed to retire by sea out of Greece, that his restless enemies might cease their persecution; but the guides, in conformity to Paul's direction, conducted them to Athens ‡, where they left him, after receiving orders to tell Silas and Timothy to repair to him as soon as possible.

While Paul continued at Athens, expecting the arrival of his companions, he walked up and down to take an accurate survey of the city, which he found wretchedly over-run with superstition and idolatry. The inhabitants were remarkably religious and devout, they had a great number of gods whom they adored; false, indeed, they were, but such as they, being destitute of revelation, accounted true; and so very careful were they that no deity should want due honour from them, that they had an altar inscribed, *to the unknown God* §.

These superstitious practices greatly afflicted Paul, in consequence of which he exerted all his endeavours to convert the people. He disputed on the sabbath-day in the synagogues of the Jews; and, at other times, took all opportunities of preaching to the Athenians the coming of the Messiah to save the world.

This doctrine was equally new and strange to the

† Thessalonica was antiently called Thesma, from the sea to which it adjoins. It is the opinion of some that it received the latter name in memory of the victory which Philip king of Macedon obtained over the Thessalians; but others think it took its name from Thessalonica, the wife of Cassander, and daughter of Philip. It is at present called Salonichi, has a safe harbour for the benefit of commerce, and is an archbishop's see of the Grecian church.

‡ Athens was once the most celebrated city for learning of any in the world. It was situated on a gulf of the Ægean Sea, which comes up to the isthmus of the Peloponnese, or Morea, in that district of Greece, called Attica, and was the parent of that dialect which was esteemed the purest and finest Greek. Cicero calls it the fountain, from whence ci-

vility, learning, and laws were derived to other nations.

§ That the Athenians had altars in their public places, without names on them, and others to unknown gods, is evident from the testimony of Laertius, who informs us, that when a great plague raged at Athens, and several means had been attempted for the removal of it, they were advised by Epimedes the philosopher, to build an altar and dedicate it to the proper and peculiar God to whom sacrifices were due. And the Athenians not knowing by what name to call him, erected an altar with this inscription, *To the Gods of Asia, Europe, and Africa, to the strange and unknown God*; by which, as some imagine, they intended the God of the Jews, who had given such wonderful deliverances to his own people.

the Athenians; and though they did not persecute Paul as the Jews had done, yet his preaching Jesus was considered, by the Epicurean* and Stoic philosophers as a fabulous legend. The generality of the people, however, considered it as a discovery of some new gods, which they had not yet placed in their temples; and though they were not unwilling to receive any new deities, yet, as the Areopagus † was to judge of all gods, to whom public worship might be allowed, they took him before the members of that court, to give an account of his doctrine.

Paul, being placed before the judges of this high assembly, explained the nature of the doctrine he taught in a very grave and elegant speech, the substance of which was to this effect: “Ye
“ men of Athens, I am here brought as a prisoner into your supreme tribunal, as one who
“ sets forth strange doctrines; and yet, from
“ the observations I have made since I arrived
“ in your city, I find you so much attached to
“ superstition, that you know not what you worship, nay, that you even have such a number
“ of idols, that you cannot find names for them;
“ for one of your altars has upon it an inscription to the unknown God. That the true God
“ of heaven and earth is, in a great measure,
“ unknown to you is very evident, and that is
“ the Being whose works I now publish to you.
“ By Him was all nature created; and as he fills
“ immensity with his presence, so he cannot be
“ circumscribed by temples made with hands.
“ Our worship, as men, can add nothing to his
“ perfections; for all we have, and all we enjoy,
“ is the unmerited gift of his inexhaustible bounty. When he created us out of nothing he
“ appointed that we should consider ourselves
“ as children of the same common parent; and
“ in the course of his Providence he has so ordered it, that either by nature or revelation
“ we should use such means as may, in the end,
“ lead us to the knowledge of himself, and promote our eternal happiness, for he is every
“ where present, and none of our thoughts can
“ be hidden from him. Nay, be not surprized,
“ for one of your own poets has expressly declared, that we are the offspring of the Supreme Being, and, therefore, we are not to
“ form carnal notions of his perfections, as if he
“ could be represented in a human shape. It is
“ true, God, in his infinite mercy, drew a veil
“ over those ages of ignorance; but now he hath
“ made his will known, and, therefore, those
“ who have been long slaves to their lusts and
“ passions, are commanded to turn from the
“ evil of their ways, in order to obtain the Divine favour. And this is the more necessary,
“ because he hath fixed, by an unalterable de-

“ cree, that when the universal frame of nature
“ shall be dissolved, he will raise mankind from
“ the grave, and reward or punish them according to their works here below. As a proof
“ of this he has already raised up Christ from
“ the dead, and, as he has become the first fruits
“ of those who still sleep, so he has ordered that,
“ by him, all mankind shall be judged. Such
“ is the doctrine I deliver unto you, and I leave
“ you to judge whether or not I have acted as
“ an impostor.”

That part of Paul's discourse in which he mentioned the resurrection gave great offence to some of the philosophers, who mocked and derided him; while others, more modest, but not satisfied with the proofs he had given, gravely said, *We would hear thee again of this matter.* After this Paul left the court, but not without some success, for a few of his auditors (among whom were Dionysius, one of the senators, and Damaris, a lady of considerable rank) believed his doctrine, and attended his instructions.—Thus boldly did this intrepid servant and soldier of Jesus Christ assert the cause of his Divine Master among the great, the wise and the learned; and thus did he reason, with the most distinguished strength and eloquence, on the nature of God, and the manner in which he has commanded his creatures to worship him even in spirit and in truth.

During Paul's stay at Athens, Timothy and Silas (according to the orders they had received) came to him from Thessalonica, with an account that the Christians there had been under persecution from their fellow-citizens ever since his departure. This gave great uneasiness to Paul, and at first inclined him to visit them in person, in order to confirm them in the faith they had embraced. But reflecting on the consequences that might ensue if he went himself, he sent Timothy and Silas to comfort them, and put them in mind of what he had before told them, namely, that persecution would be the constant attendant on their profession.

After the departure of Timothy and Silas, Paul left Athens, and went to Corinth ‡, where he met with a certain Jew, named Aquila, lately come from Italy, with Priscilla his wife, because Claudius had made an edict for banishing all the Jews from Rome. Paul having instructed these two in the Christian faith, took up his lodgings, with them (and made their house his principal place of residence during his stay at Corinth. Every sabbath-day, he preached in the synagogues, labouring to convince both Jews and Greeks, that Jesus was the true Messiah.

A short time after Paul had been at Corinth, Timothy and Silas arrived thither from Thessalonica,

* The Epicureans among the Greeks and Romans were much the same as the Sadducees among the Jews; for both denied a Divine providence and a future state.

† The Areopagus was a celebrated court or senate, where justice was administered to all ranks of people by judges learned in the law. It was situated on Mars-hill, an eminence without the city, and many of the inhabitants of Athens spent much of their time in it, disputing with each other on speculative points, and asking news concerning the

progress of the Roman arms in different parts of the world.

‡ Corinth was the capital of Achaia, and had its name from one Corinthus, who took and rebuilt it. Its situation, which is at the bottom of the isthmus which joins the Peloponnesus to the continent, rendered it capable of commanding all Greece: but its inhabitants, living as it were upon two seas, were chiefly merchants, and by their commerce procured abundance of wealth, which produced ostentation, effeminacy, and all manner of vice.

Ionica, with the joyful news of the steadfast adherence of the Christians in that city to the truth of the Gospel. This was a matter of great consolation to Paul, who thereupon wrote his first Epistle to the Thessalonians. In this epistle "he highly applauds their courage and zeal in the belief of the Christian religion, and exhorts them to a noble constancy and perseverance amidst their afflictions: he commends them for their charity to the believers in Macedonia, and gives them many instructions concerning conversation, and leading a good life: he exhorts them to the practice of all purity and holiness; to avoid idleness; to be diligent in their callings, and not immoderate in their grief for the dead: and concludes with instructions to them concerning the doctrine of the resurrection, the manner of Christ's coming to judge the world, and the obligation all were under to make a timely preparation for so solemn an event."

After the arrival of Timothy and Silas at Corinth, Paul preached the doctrine of Christ with fresh ardour to the Jews; but they instead of attending to what he said, opposed him, and what they could not conquer by fair argument, and force of reason, they endeavoured to carry by noise and clamour, blended with blasphemous and opprobrious language. In consequence of this, Paul, to testify his abhorrence of their behaviour, shook his garments, and told them, that since they were determined to draw down the vengeance of heaven upon their own heads, he was absolutely guiltless and innocent, and would thenceforth address himself to the Gentiles. Accordingly he left them, and repaired to the house of one Justus, a religious proselyte, where, by his preaching and miracles, he converted great numbers to the faith, among whom were some few Jews, particularly Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and two others of considerable distinction, who, with their families, were baptized, and admitted members of the Christian church.

Paul was greatly perplexed in his mind on account of the perverseness and obstinacy of the Jews, and began to despair of being able to convince them of the impropriety of their behaviour, or to bring them to an effectual discernment of the truth of his doctrine. But he was encouraged to persevere in the attempt by an heavenly vision, in which he was told, that notwithstanding the bad success he had hitherto

met with, there was a large harvest to be gathered in that place: that therefore he should not be afraid of his enemies, but preach the Gospel boldly, for that he might be assured of the Divine protection in all his undertakings. In consequence of this, and in certain hopes of success, Paul continued at Corinth for the space of one year and six months, teaching the word of God with various success to the people.

Some time after Paul had received encouragement from the heavenly vision, the Jews made a general insurrection against him, and having taken him into custody, carried him before Gallio, who, at that time, was pro-consul of Achaia. The accusation they laid against him was, that he had attempted to introduce a new religion, contrary to what was established by the Jewish law, and permitted by the Roman powers. But, as Gallio apprehended that this was a controversy which did not fall under the cognizance of the civil judicature, he would not have any concern in it, and therefore ordered his officers to drive them out of the court. Upon this the Gentiles took Sosthenes, a ruler of the synagogue, and one of Paul's chief accusers, and beat him publicly before the tribunal; but this did not give the pro-consul the least disturbance.

Paul continued at Corinth some time after this incident, and, before his departure from thence, wrote his second Epistle to the Thessalonians. In this Epistle "he endeavours to confirm their minds in the faith, and to animate them courageously to endure persecution from the unbelieving Jews, a lost and undone race of men, whom the Divine vengeance was ready to overtake: he rectifies the misinterpretation which false teachers had made of some passages in his former Epistle, relative to the day of judgment, as if it was just at hand, and shews what events (especially that of the coming and destruction of *the man of sin*) must precede the approach of that day. Having craved their prayers in *his behalf*, and made his request to God in *theirs*, he concludes with divers precepts, especially to shun idleness and ill company, and *not to be weary in well-doing*."

After Paul had planted the church of Corinth, he left that city, and, taking with him Aquila and Priscilla, embarked at Cenchrea, from whence they sailed to Ephesus ||. Here he preached some time in the synagogue of the Jews; but being

|| Ephesus, the metropolis and principal mart of the Proconsular Asia, was situated upon the river Cayster, and on the side of a hill, which, towards the west, had the prospect of a lovely plain, watered and beautified with the pleasant circles of the river, turning and winding in so many curious mazes, that some travellers have mistaken it for the meander, and this the rather, because the Turks gave it the name of the Lesser Mendres. Among heathen authors this city was once much celebrated for its famous temple of Diana, which, for its largeness and workmanship, was accounted one of the seven wonders of the world. It is said to have been 425 feet long, 220 broad, and to have been supported with 127 pillars of marble, 70 feet high, whereof 27 were most curiously wrought, and all the rest polished. One Ctesiphon, a famous architect in his time, contrived the model of it, and that with so much art and curiosity, that it took up two hundred years before it was finished, even though it was built at the common charge of all Asia properly so called. After it was finished it was seven times set on fire; but once

more especially, on the very same day that Socrates was poisoned, 400 years before Christ; and, at another time (when Erostratus fired it only to get himself a name) on the same night that Alexander the Great was born. It was rebuilt, however, and beautified by the Ephesians, to which work the Ladies of Ephesus contributed very largely. In the time of our apostle, it retained a great deal of its former grandeur; but at present it is only an heap of ruins. The only two buildings worth observation are, a strong and lofty castle, situate on an eminence, and a beautiful church, honoured with the name of St. John, but now converted into a Turkish mosque. All the rest of the place is the habitation of herdsmen and farmers, who live in low and humble cottages of dirt, covered on the top with earth, and sheltered from the extremity of the weather by mighty masses of ruinous walls, the pride and ostentation of former days, and in the present, the emblem of the frailty of the world, and the transient vanity of human glory.

being resolved to attend the celebration of the passover at Jerusalem, he set sail for Cesarea, leaving behind him Aquila and Priscilla, to whom he promised to return (if God would permit) as soon as possible. From Cesarea Paul proceeded to Jerusalem, and after having visited the church there, and kept the feast of the Passover, went to Antioch. Here he stayed some time, and then traversed the countries of Galatia and Phrygia, taking his course towards Ephesus, and confirming the new converted Christians in every place through which he passed.

During the time Paul spent in this large circuit, Providence took care of the churches of Ephesus and Corinth by means of one Apollos, an eloquent Jew of Alexandria, and well acquainted with the law and writings of the prophets. This man, going to Ephesus, though he was only instructed in the rudiments of Christianity, and John's baptism, yet taught with great courage, and a most powerful zeal. After being fully instructed in the faith by Aquila and Priscilla, he passed over into Achaia, being furnished with commendatory letters by the churches of Ephesus and Corinth. He was of great service in Achaia, by watering what Paul had planted, confirming the disciples, and powerfully convincing many others of the Jews that Jesus was the true and only Messiah promised in the Sacred Writings.

While Apollos was thus employed, Paul returned to Ephesus, where he took up his abode for a considerable time. The first thing he did after his return was, to examine certain disciples (in number about twelve) *whether they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed?* To which they answered, "That the doctrine they had received did not promise any thing of that nature, nor had they ever heard that such an extraordinary spirit had been bestowed on the members of the church." This answer greatly surprised the apostle, who asked them in what name they had been baptized; since in the Christian form, the name of the Holy Ghost was always expressed? They replied, that they had only received John's baptism; upon which the apostle informed them that, though John's baptism commanded nothing but repentance, yet it tacitly implied the whole doctrine of Christ and the Holy Ghost. When they heard this they were baptized according to the form prescribed by Christ himself, that is, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and after the apostle had prayed and laid his hands on them, they received the gifts of tongues and other miraculous powers.

After this Paul entered into the Jewish synagogues, in which (for the first three months) he daily contended and disputed with the Jews, endeavouring, with great earnestness and resolution, to convince them of the truth of the Christian religion. But when, instead of meeting with success, he found they were inflexible in their obstinacy and infidelity, he left the synagogue, and, taking those with him whom he had converted, instructed them, and others who resorted to him, in the school of one Tyrannus. Here he continued to preach the Gospel two years, by which means the Jews and proselytes had an opportu-

nity of hearing the glad tidings of salvation: and as miracles were the clearest evidence of a Divine commission, God was pleased to testify the truth of the doctrine Paul preached, by a variety of miraculous operations, many of which were of the most peculiar and extraordinary nature; for he not only healed those diseased persons that came to him, but, if handkerchiefs or aprons were only touched by him, and applied to the sick, or those possessed with evil spirits, they were instantly cured.

In the city of Ephesus, and its neighbourhood were many vagabond Jews, who went about, from one place to the other, pretending to cure diseases, and cast out devils by their exorcisms. Among these were seven brothers (the sons of one Sceva, a Jewish priest) who, observing with what facility Paul effected his miraculous cures and dispossessions of evil spirits, attempted themselves to do the like; and, to add greater force to their proceedings, instead of the usual form of incantation (which was in the name of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) they invoked the name of Jesus over a demoniac. But here it pleased God to make a most distinguished and visible difference between those who applied this *powerful* name *regularly* and with *commission*, and others, who, of their own heads, and for ill designs, dared to usurp it: for the demoniac, falling upon the exorcists, tore off their cloaths, wounded their bodies, and scarce suffered them to escape with their lives.

When this singular event came to be known among the Jews and Gentiles in Ephesus, they were filled with such a reverential fear, that none dared to mention the name of Jesus, but with the most profound respect: and many, who had addicted themselves to the study of magic, acknowledged their sins, and publicly burnt their books, the value of which was estimated at no less than *fifty thousand pieces of silver*. So efficacious was the Gospel of Christ in these parts!

While Paul was diligently pursuing his ministry at Ephesus, Peter was preaching the Gospel to the Jews in several provinces of the Lesser Asia; from whence, travelling eastward, he at length came to the ancient city of Babylon in Chaldea. Here he staid some time, and from hence wrote his first epistle (which is called a Catholick or General Epistle) to the converted Jews who were dispersed in various parts of Chaldea. Peter introduces this admirable epistle with a solemn thanksgiving to God for their call to Christianity, whereby they had obtained a lively hope of an eternal inheritance in heaven; after which he recommends them to the practice of several virtues, as a means to make their *calling* and *election* sure, viz. "That they should live in a constant worship and fear of God, and imitate their Master, Jesus Christ, in holiness and purity: that they should be diligent hearers of the Gospel, and grow up to perfection by it: that they should lead exemplary lives among the Gentiles, abstaining from carnal lusts, and behaving themselves with modesty, thereby to convince their enemies, that calumnies would be unreasonable: that they should behave themselves well under their respective relations, submitting themselves to their governors, whether superior

or inferior to themselves in point of circumstances : that servants should obey their masters, wives be subject to their husbands, and husbands honour their wives : that they should all love one another fervently and unfeignedly, bear afflictions patiently, live in union, and sympathize with each other in their afflictions. And lastly, that the ministers and pastors of the several churches should take special care of the flocks committed to their charge; teach them diligently, and govern them gently, not seeking their own

gain and profit, but the salvation of the souls of the people."—This is the purport of Peter's Epistle to the converted Jews; and the whole is written with a fervour and zeal truly consistent with the sentiments and abilities of so great an apostle. The language is simple, and every expression so formed, as to convey a thorough idea of his meaning to the weakest capacity. All the arguments he makes use of to teach them patience are drawn from the sacred writings, and are consistent with the doctrines of true religion.

C H A P. V.

Paul forms the resolution of leaving Ephesus, but, before his departure, receives advice of the misconduct of the converts at Corinth, in consequence of which he writes his first Epistle to the Corinthians. He likewise, on a like complaint, writes his Epistle to the Galatians. A great tumult happens at Ephesus, occasioned by one Demetrius, a silversmith; but is at length suppressed by the judicious conduct of the Recorder of the city. Paul, after appointing Timothy bishop of Ephesus, leaves that city, and goes to Macedonia, from whence he writes his second Epistle to the Corinthians. He leaves Macedonia, and goes to Corinth, from whence he writes his Epistle to the Romans. Returns from Corinth to Macedonia, and performs a singular miracle at Troas. Goes from Troas to Miletus, where he gives the Ephesian clergy his pastoral charge. Proceeds from Miletus to Jerusalem, where he is apprehended by the Jews. Claudius Lysias, commander of the Roman garrison in the castle of Antonia, interposes in his behalf. Paul escapes scourging, and happily eludes the malice of the Jews.

PAUL, having been at Ephesus about two years, resolved to return into Macedonia, and after going from thence to Jerusalem, in order to celebrate the feast of Pentecost, to proceed in his journey, which he had long intended, to Rome. In consequence of these resolutions, and as a necessary preparation to carry them into execution, he sent Timothy and Erastus before him into Macedonia, while himself staid behind at Ephesus, in order to settle some matters that were necessary to be adjusted previous to his departure.

Soon after Timothy and Erastus had left Ephesus, Paul received information of some disturbances at Corinth, hatched and fomented by a number of false teachers crept in among the converts of that city, who endeavoured to draw them into parties and factions, by persuading some to be for Paul, and others for Apollos, the different persons from whom they had received instructions relative to the Christian faith. In consequence of these disturbances they committed great disorders, and celebrated the Holy Sacrament very irreverently. They were addicted to fornication, and one in particular had run into incest, by marrying his father's wife. They were unjust and fraudulent in their dealings; they went to law at heathen tribunals, and, among them, were found some, who were bold and profligate enough to deny the resurrection.

To quell these schisms and factions which had taken place, and to chastise them in a proper manner for their misconduct, Paul wrote his first

Epistle to the Corinthians, in which he “ shews the inequality of Christ's ministers, and their insufficiency for the work to which they are ordained, without the Divine assistance; orders the incestuous person to be excommunicated, lest his example should infect others; blames their litigious law-suits, as thinking it much better to refer their differences to some of their own body; propounds the first institution of the sacrament, and a previous examination of their lives, to bring them to a right use of it; and, having added several things concerning a decent behaviour, both of men and women, in their churches; concerning the gifts of the Holy Ghost; the excellency of charity; the gift of tongues, and prayer in an unknown language, he proves the truth of the Gospel, and the certainty of a future resurrection, almost to a demonstration.”

It was about this time also that Paul wrote his Epistle to the Galatians. He had received information that, since his departure from thence, several impostors had crept in among them, who strongly insisted on the necessity of circumcision, and other Mosaic rites, and greatly disparaged his authority, Paul, therefore, in this Epistle, reproves them with some necessary warmth and severity, for suffering themselves so easily to be imposed upon by the crafty artifices of seducers. He largely refutes these judaical opinions wherewith they were infected, and, by several arguments, proves, that the slavery of the law brought a curse with it, was destructive of

of their Christian liberty, and incapable of procuring their justification in the sight of God. Among these reproofs and arguments, however, he intermixes several exhortations full of paternal and apostolic charity; and, towards the conclusion, gives them many excellent rules and directions for the conduct of their lives and conversations."

A short time before Paul left Ephesus, a circumstance occurred, which occasioned a general disturbance throughout the city, and had nearly proved fatal to him and his adherents. In the celebrated temple of Diana was an image of that goddess, which the idolatrous priests persuaded the people was made by Jupiter himself, and dropped down from heaven; for which reason it was held in great veneration, not only at Ephesus, but throughout all Asia. In consequence of this the people procured silver shrines, or figures of the temple and Diana, of such a size as to carry in their pockets, either for curiosity, or to stir them up to their devotion. This proved the source of a great deal of business to the silversmiths of Ephesus; of whom one Demetrius was the chief. This man plainly perceiving that Christianity tended to the subversion of idolatry, and consequently to the ruin of their gainful employment, called all the artists together, and pathetically represented to them, how inevitably they must be reduced to a state of poverty, if they suffered Paul to bring their temple and goddess into contempt, by persuading people, as he did, that they were no gods which were made with hands.

This speech of Demetrius fired them with a zeal which they could no longer contain; so that they cried out with one voice, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians*. They should, indeed, have considered that if their goddess was able to defend herself against the doctrines preached by Paul, neither she nor the temple were in any danger: whereas if Paul was able to destroy their gods, it was in vain for them to resist him. But interest and superstition meeting in the minds of a bigotted multitude, admitted of no reason. They were all fired with a zeal for their goddess, and determined, if they could find Paul, to expose him to the beasts in the theatre, it being customary, in those days, at the celebration of their public games and festivals, to expose such as they deemed criminals to the ravage of wild beasts for the diversion of the spectators. The whole city was filled with the tumult; and the crowd missing Paul, laid hold on Gaius and Aristarchus, two Macedonians of Paul's company, and hurried them into the theatre, with a design to throw them to the wild beasts. Paul, who was at this time in a place of security, hearing of the danger to which his brethren were exposed, was very desirous of venturing after them, in order to speak in their behalf; but he was at last dissuaded from it not only by the Christians, but also by the Gentile governors of the theatrical games, who were his friends, and who assured him that he would only endanger himself without rescuing his friends.

The noise and confusion of the multitude was now prodigious, most of them not knowing the reason for which they were come together; and therefore some said one thing, and some another. In this distraction Alexander, a Jewish convert, was singled out by the multitude, and by the instigation of the Jews was going to make his defence, in which, doubtless, he would have laid the whole blame upon Paul: but the multitude perceiving him to be a Jew, and therefore suspecting he was one of Paul's associates, raised another outcry for near two hours together, wherein nothing could be heard, but *Great is Diana of the Ephesians*. This confusion brought the town-clerk, or Recorder of the city, who kept the register of the games, into the theatre, to suppress, if possible, so uncommon a tumult. Having, with great difficulty, obtained silence, he calmly and discreetly told them, "That it was sufficiently known to all the world what a mighty veneration the inhabitants of Ephesus had for their great goddess Diana, and the famous image which fell down from Jupiter, so that there needed not any disturbance to vindicate and assert it: that they had seized on persons, who were not guilty either of sacrilege or blasphemy against their goddess; that if Demetrius and his company had any just charge against them, the courts were sitting, and they might enter their accusation; or, if the controversy was about any other matter, there were proper judicatures to determine it in; that therefore they would do well to be pacified, having done more already than they could answer, and being in danger of incurring a severe punishment, if they should be called to an account (as very likely they might) for that day's riotous assembly."

This speech had the desired effect: the multitude were convinced that they had acted very improperly, and therefore repaired to their respective habitations; and Gaius, Aristarchus, and Alexander were released without any hurt. But the escape of Paul was so remarkable, that he mentions it as a miraculous deliverance. *We had* (says he) *the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God, who raised the dead, who delivered us from so great a death*. And in another place he tells us, *he fought with beasts at Ephesus*; alluding either to the design of the enraged multitude of throwing him to the wild beasts in the theatre, though their intention was not executed, or to the manners of the people, who justly deserved the character of being savage and brutal to the highest degree.

Soon after the tumult was suppressed at Ephesus, Paul, having called the church together, and constituted Timothy bishop of the place, took his leave, and departed by Troas to Macedonia; where, having instructed some, and confirmed others in the principles of a sound faith and holy life, he continued his preaching all over the country, even as far as Illyricum*. During this journey Paul met with many troubles and dangers, *without were fightings, and within fears*; but

God,

* This is a province of Europe, lying to the north or north-west of Macedonia, along the Adriatic Sea, now

called the Gulph of Venice. It was commonly distinguished into two parts; *Istria* to the north, where now lies Croatia; and *Illyria* to the south, where now lies Croatia.

God, who comforteth those that are cast down, revived his spirits by the arrival of Titus, who gave him a pleasing account of the good effects his epistle had produced at Corinth, and what great reformation it had wrought among the converts of that city. But, as several vain-glorious teachers still persisted in their contumacy, vilifying his authority, and misrepresenting his words and actions; charging him, particularly with levity, in not going there according to his promise; with severity, in his dealings with the incestuous person; with imperiousness in his writings, abjectness in his person, and some small tincture of irreligion in overthrowing the Mosaic law (all which he understood from Titus) he thought it necessary to write a second epistle to the Corinthians. In this epistle he excuses his not going directly to Corinth, for fear of occasioning them sorrow, and giving himself uneasiness, in being obliged to treat with severity those who had not yet amended their faults. He commends their zeal against the incestuous person, but now that he had suffered enough for his transgression, allowed them to be reconciled to him. He justifies his own conduct, vindicates the dignity and ministry of the Gospel, and proves its great excellency above the law. He disclaims against those false teachers, who made it their business to traduce and vilify him, and threatens them with his apostolic authority whenever he shall arrive among them. He then speaks of himself with some advantage, and, though he mentions his supernatural gifts and revelations, yet seems to glory most in his extraordinary labourings and sufferings for the Gospel. And, lastly, he exhorts them all to the works of penance and mortification, lest, when he arrived thither, he should be obliged to exert his authority against offenders; and particularly cautions them to have their alms in readiness, that they may not be an hindrance to him when he shall arrive at Corinth."

After Paul had travelled through the principal places in Macedonia and Achaia, confirming those who had been converted, and bringing over others to the faith, he proceeded to Corinth, where he took up his residence for the space of three months. During his abode here he wrote his famous Epistle to the Romans, which he sent by Phebe, a deaconess of the church of Cenchrea, near Corinth. In this Epistle "he states and determines the great controversy between the Jews and the Gentiles, relative to the obligation of the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic law, and those main and material doc-

trines of Christianity which depend on it, such as that of Christian liberty, the use of different things, &c. He also points out the effects of original sin, and the power it has even among the regenerate; and, through the whole of the Epistle, intermixes many admirable instructions and exhortations to the duties of an holy and religious life, such as the Christian doctrine doth naturally tend to produce."

Paul, having gathered considerable alms both in Macedonia and Achaia, resolved to leave Corinth, in order to carry them into Judea for the relief of the Christians in those parts. His first intention was to go through Syria, as being by far the nearest way; but having received information that the Jews of that country had formed a conspiracy against his life, he altered his course, and determined to go through Macedonia. Accordingly, leaving Corinth, he proceeded to Philippi, where he stayed some time, in order to celebrate the Feast of the Passover. From hence he took shipping, and, in five days, landed at Troas, where he continued a week. On the sabbath, which was the last day of his staying there, he preached to the Christians of the place, who had assembled together in order to receive the sacrament; and, as he intended leaving them the next morning, he continued his harangue till midnight. The length of his discourse, and the time of night, caused some of his hearers to be so fatigued as to fall asleep. Among these was a young man named Eutychus, who, sitting in a higher window, so forgot himself, that he fell from thence to the ground, and was taken up dead. This circumstance being made known to the apostle, he stopped his discourse, and going to the young man, by prayers to the throne of grace, restored him to life and health.—How indefatigable was this great apostle in doing good! how closely did he tread in the steps of his great Master, who *went about doing good*! He preached and wrought miracles, wherever he went. Like a master-builder, he either laid a foundation, or raised the superstructure. He was *instant, in season and out of season*, and spared no pains in endeavouring to secure the eternal welfare of his fellow-creatures.

After performing this miracle, Paul resumed his discourse, and having spent the whole night in these holy exercises, early the next morning he took his leave, and travelled on foot to Assos*, whither he had before sent his companions (among whom was Luke) by sea. From Assos they sailed to Mitylene †; then passing by Chios ‡, arrived at

atia; and Dalmatia to the south, which still retains its name. St. Paul tells us, that *from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, he had fully preached the Gospel of Christ*. Rom. xv. 19. So that he must have travelled into Syria, Phœnicia, Arabia, Cilicia, Pamphylia, Pisidia, Lycaonia, Galatia, Pontus, Paphlagonia, Phrygia, Troas, Asia, Caria, Lyfia, Ionia, Lydia, the isles of Cyprus and Crete, Thracia, Macedonia, Thessalia, and Achaia. So justly, and without ostentation, might he say, that, in relation to the other apostles, *he laboured more abundantly than them all*. 1 Cor. xv. 10.

* Assos is a sea-port town, situate on the south-west part of the province of Troas, and over-against the island Lesbos. By land, it is a great deal nearer Troas, than it is by sea, because of a promontory that runs a great way into the ocean, and must be doubled before we can come to Assos,

which was the reason that the apostle chose rather to walk it.

† Mitylene was one of the principal cities of the isle of Lesbos, seated in a peninsula, with a commodious haven on each side, and soon became so considerable, as to give name to the whole island (at present called Metelin) many years ago. The island (which is one of the largest in the Archipelago) was, in former times, renowned for the many eminent persons it had produced; such as Sappho, the inventress of Sapphic verses; Alcæus, a famous Lyric poet; Pittacus, one of the seven wise men of Greece; Theophrastus, the noble physician and philosopher; and Arion, the celebrated Musician; and the Turks, who have it now in possession, think it still a place of consequence enough to deserve a fortress and garrison to defend it.

‡ Chios is an island in the Archipelago, next to Lesbos, or Metelin, both in its situation and bigness. It lies over-against

at Samos §, and proceeded to Trogyllium ||, from whence, after staying one day, they went to Miletus **, not putting in at Ephesus, because the apostle was resolved, if possible, to be at Jerusalem at the Feast of Pentecost.

Soon after Paul arrived at Miletus he sent to Ephesus, to assemble together the Pastors and elders of the churches in that city. On their arrival, he delivered to them a very long and pathetic discourse, wherein he reminded them with what uprightness and integrity, with what affection and humility, and, with what great danger and trouble, he had been conversant among them, and preached the Gospel to them; ever since his coming into those parts: that he had not failed to acquaint them both publicly and privately, with whatsoever might be profitable to their souls, urging both Jews and Gentiles to repentance and reformation, and an hearty reception of the faith of Christ: That now he was determined to go to Jerusalem, where he did not know what particular sufferings would befall him, only that he had been foretold by those, who were endued with prophetic gifts of the Holy Ghost, that, in every city, bonds and afflictions would attend him; but that he was not concerned at this, being willing to lay down his life whenever the Gospel required it, and fully determined to serve, with the strictest fidelity, his great Lord and Master. Here he made a short pause, and then resumed his discourse in words to this effect: "I well know
" that you will see my face no more; but for my
" encouragement and satisfaction, ye yourselves
" can bear me witness, that I have not, by concealing any part of the Christian doctrine,
" betrayed your souls. And as for yourselves,
" whom God hath made bishops and pastors of
" his church, you should be careful to feed,
" guide and direct those Christians under your
" inspection, and be infinitely tender of the welfare of souls, for whose redemption the Blessed Jesus laid down his own life. All the
" care, therefore, possible for you to use is no
" more than necessary; for, after my departure,

heretical teachers will appear in the church, to
" the great danger of the souls of men; seeking;
" by every crafty method; and pernicious doctrine, to gain proselytes to their party, and;
" by those means, fill the church of Christ with
" schisms and factions. Watch ye, therefore,
" and remember with what tears and sorrow I
" have, during three years; warned you of these
" things. And now I recommend you to the
" Divine favour and protection, and to the rules
" and instructions of the Gospel, which, if properly adhered to, will undoubtedly dispose
" and perfect you for that state of happiness
" which the Almighty hath prepared for good
" men in the mansions of eternity. Ye well
" know that I have, from the beginning, dealt
" faithfully and uprightly with you; that I have
" not had any covetous designs, or ever desired
" the riches of other men; nay, I have laboured, with mine own hands, to support myself
" and my companions: you ought, therefore,
" to support the weak, and relieve the poor, rather than be yourselves chargeable to others,
" according to that incomparable saying of the
" great Redeemer of mankind; *It is more blessed
" to give, than to receive.*"—If we minutely attend to the whole of this apostle's preaching and writing, we shall find that he strenuously inculcates not only points of faith, but also practical duties, without which our faith would be in vain.

After Paul had finished his farewell discourse to the bishops and pastors of Ephesus, he knelt down, and, by way of a final conclusion, joined with them fervently in prayer; which being over they all melted into tears, and, with the greatest expression of sorrow, attended him to the ship, grieving, in the most passionate manner, on account of his having told them *that they should see his face no more.*

After Paul had taken this affecting farewell of the pastors and elders of Ephesus, he, with his attendants, left Miletus, and going on board a ship sailed with a fair wind to Coos †. The day after their arrival here, they proceeded to Rhodes,

against Smyrna, and is not above four leagues distant from the Asiatic continent. It is celebrated by Horace and Martial, for the wine and figs that came from thence; but, at present, its renown is, that it produces the most excellent mastic in the world, wherein the people pay their tribute to the Grand Seignior. Nor is it less remarkable for what Sir Paul Ricaut, in his Present State of the Greek Church, tells us of it, viz. that there is no place in the Turkish dominions, where Christians enjoy more freedom in their religion and estates than in this isle, to which they are intitled by an antient capitulation made with Sultan Mahomet II. which, to this day, is maintained so faithfully, that no Turk can strike or abuse a Christian, without severe correction.

§ Samos is another isle in the Archipelago, lying south-east of Chios, and about five miles from the Asiatic continent. It is famous among heathen writers for the worship of Juno; for one of the sybils called Sybilla Samia; for Pherecydes, who foretold an earthquake that happened there by drinking of the waters; and more especially, for the birth of Pythagoras, who excelled all the seven wise men, so renowned among the Greeks. It was formerly a free commonwealth, and the inhabitants were so powerful, that they managed many prosperous wars against their neighbours; but, at present, the Turks have reduced it to such a mean and depopulated condition, that a few pirates dare land and plunder as they please; so that ever since the year 1676, no Turk

has ever ventured to live upon it for fear of being carried into captivity by those rovers.

|| Trogyllium is a cape, or promontory, on the Asiatic coast, opposite to Samos, and much below Ephesus, having a town of the same name.

** Miletus was a port town on the continent of Asia Minor, and in the province of Caria, memorable for being the birth-place of Thales, one of the seven wise men in Greece, and father of the Ionic philosophy; of Anaximenes, his scholar; Timotheus the musician, and Anaximenes the philosopher. At present it is called by the Turks, Melas; and not far distant from it is the true meander, which, though it encircles all the plain it runs through with many pleasing mazes and innumerable windings, yet, in some places, it goes with such a current, as lifts up the earth and gravel from the bottom, which makes its water not so clear and crystalline, as might be expected.

† This was an island in the Archipelago, lying near the south-west point of Asia Minor, and having a city of the same name. It was formerly celebrated for the birth of Hippocrates the famous physician, and Apelles the famous painter; for a stately temple dedicated to Apollo, and another to Juno; for the richness of its wines, and for the fineness of a *stuff*, made here, which was perfectly transparent, and called *vestimenta coa*.

Rhodes †, and from thence to Patara ‡, where, meeting with a ship bound for Phœnicia, they went on board, and, passing Cyprus, sailed to Syria, and landed at Tyre, the place where the ship was to unlade her burthen.

Paul staid at Tyre seven days, in the course of which he was advised by some Christians of the place not to go up to Jerusalem. But this advice Paul would by no means take; upon which the disciples, accompanied by their wives and children, attended him out of the city, and when they came to the sea-shore, Paul knelt down and prayed for them, in the same manner he had done before at Miletus.

From Tyre Paul and his companions sailed to Ptolemais §, where they staid one day, spending their time in conversation with the disciples of that place. The next day they went to Cæsarea, and visited Philip, one of the seven deacons, who had been sent by the apostles to preach the Gospel in Samaria and other places. This Philip had four virgin daughters, all of whom were endued with the gift of prophecy; and on this account, together with Paul's great regard for Philip, he resided at his house during his stay at Cæsarea.

While Paul was at Philip's house, there came thither a prophet, named Agabus, from Judea. This person, after the manner of the old prophets (who often prophesied by symbols, or significant expressions) took Paul's girdle, and, binding it about his own hands and feet, said, in the presence and hearing of the whole company, *Thus saith the Holy Ghost; So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.* On the prophet's saying these words, not only the companions of Paul, but likewise all the Christians present, were greatly troubled, and earnestly besought him that he would not go up to Jerusalem. To which Paul replied, *What mean ye to weep, and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.*

When the disciples found that Paul's resolution was not to be shaken, they did not importune him any farther; in consequence of which he and his companions left Cæsarea, and prosecuting their journey arrived safe at Jerusalem, where they were kindly and joyfully received by the Christians of that city.

The day after Paul and his companions arrived at Jerusalem, they went to the house of James the apostle, where the rest of the bishops and governors of the church were assembled together. After mutual salutations, Paul gave them a particular account of the success with which God had blessed his endeavours in propagating

Christianity among the Gentiles, for which they all joined in glorifying God. Having done this they told Paul, that he was now come to a place, in which were many thousands of Jewish converts, who were all zealous for the law of Moses, and who had been informed that he taught the Jews whom he converted to renounce circumcision, and the ceremonies of the law. That as soon as the multitude heard of his arrival, they would all assemble together to see how he behaved himself in this matter; and therefore, to prevent any disturbance, they thought it advisable for him to join himself with four men who were then going to discharge a vow; to perform the usual rites and ceremonies with them; to be at the charge of having their heads shaved; and to provide such sacrifices as the law directed; whereby it would appear, that the reports spread of him were groundless, and that himself was an observer of the Mosaic institutions.

Paul readily agreed to follow the advice given him by his brethren; in consequence of which taking with him the four persons who were to discharge their vows, he went into the temple, and told the priests that, as the time of their vow was now expired, and their purification regularly performed, they were come to make their oblation according to law.

The time of offering these oblations was seven days, near the close of which certain Jews from Asia (who had there been strong opposers of Paul's doctrine) finding him in the temple began to raise a tumult, and seizing on him called to their brethren the Jews to assist them, declaring that he was the person who had preached doctrines derogatory to the Jewish nation, and destructive to the institutions of the law of Moses. This accusation, though absolutely false, occasioned such an universal disgust among the people to Paul, that they immediately fell on him, and dragged him out of the temple, shutting the doors to prevent his returning into that holy place. After they had got him out of the temple they treated him with great indignity, and would certainly have killed him, had not Claudius Lyfias, commander of the Roman garrison in the castle of Antonia, come, with a considerable force, to his assistance. Lyfias conducted him to the castle, in the way to which Paul begged permission to speak to him; but the governor (supposing him to be an Egyptian, who, not many years before, had raised a sedition in Judea, and headed a party of four thousand profligate wretches) seemed to refuse him that favour, until Paul informed him that he was a Jew of Tarsus, and a freeman of a rich and honourable city, and therefore humbly hoped that he would not deny him the privilege of vindicating himself.

† Rhodes lies south of the province of Caria in Lesser Asia; and, among the Asiatic isles, was accounted for dignity next to Cyprus and Lesbos. It was remarkable among the antients for the expertness of its inhabitants in the art of navigation; for a college, in which the students were eminent for eloquence and mathematics; for the clearness of its air; for its pleasant and healthy climate, which induced the Roman nobility to make it a place of their recess; and more especially, for its prodigious statue of brass, con-

secrated to Apollo, or the sun, and called his *Colossus*. This statue was seventy cubits high, and stood astride over the mouth of the harbour, so that the ships sailed between its legs.

‡ This is a sea-port of Lycia, formerly beautified with a good harbour, and many temples, whereof one was dedicated to Apollo.

§ A sea-port of Syria, between Tyre and Cæsarea.

self. The governor consenting to this request, Paul, standing upon the stairs that led into the castle, after making signs for the multitude to be silent, made a speech to them in the Hebrew language, the substance of which was to the following effect :

“ Listen, ye descendants of Jacob, to a person of your own religion, and like yourselves a child of Abraham ; born in Tarsus, and brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, and fully instructed in the law delivered by Moses to our forefathers, and formerly as zealous for the temple worship, as ye are at present.

“ Nay, I persecuted unto death all who believed in Jesus, seizing on all I could find, both men and women, and casting them into prison.

“ But as I was pursuing my journey, to execute this commission, and was arrived near Damascus, there appeared, about mid-day, a light from heaven, shining round about me.

“ Terrified at so awful an appearance, I fell to the ground, and heard a voice, saying unto me, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* To which I answered, *Who art thou, Lord?* And the voice replied, *I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.*

“ After recovering from the terror with which my mind was filled, I answered, *What shall I do, Lord?* And the Lord said unto me, *Arise, and go into Damascus, and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.*

“ The brilliancy of the glory deprived me of sight ; so that my companions led me by the hand to Damascus, where one Ananias, a person well respected by all the Jews of that city, visited me, and said, *Brother Saul, receive thy sight.* And in a moment my eyes were opened, and I saw him standing before me. When he saw that my sight was restored, he said to me, The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, hath appointed thee to know his will, to see the great Messiah, the Holy One of God, and hear the voice of his mouth ; for thou art chosen to be a witness to all the nations of the earth for those surprizing things thou hast seen and heard. Why, therefore, tarriest thou here any longer ? *Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*

“ After this glorious vision, and miraculous power of the Most High, when I was returned from Damascus to Jerusalem, and offering up my prayers in the temple, I fell into a trance, and again saw the Great Son of David, who said unto me, Depart quickly from Jerusalem ; for the descendants of Jacob will refuse to believe thy testimony concerning me. And I answered, “ Lord, they know how cruelly I used thy saints

and followers : that I imprisoned, and beat them, in every synagogue whither I went. Nay, when they shed the blood of thy holy Martyr Stephen, I was also one of the spectators ; I consented to his death ; I even kept the raiment of those that slew him.” But the Lord replied, *Depart : for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.*”

The Jews had been very quiet, and paid great attention to Paul’s speech till he came to this part of it : his mentioning the commission he had received to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, threw them into the most violent outrage, and they cried out, with one voice, *Away with such a fellow from the earth : for it is not fit that he should live.* And, the more to express their indignation, they threw off their clothes, and cast dust into the air, as if they intended that moment to stone him.

When Lyfias, the captain of the guard, found to what a violent degree the people were incensed against Paul, he ordered him to be taken within the castle, and that he should be examined by scourging till he confessed the reason of the uncommon rage shewn against him by the people *. Accordingly, the lictor bound him, and was going to put the orders he had received into execution, when Paul asked the centurion who stood by, whether or not it was lawful to scourge a citizen of Rome, before any sentence had been passed upon him ? But the centurion, instead of answering his question, immediately repaired to Lyfias, beseeching him to be careful how he proceeded against the prisoner, because he was a Roman. On this information Lyfias went immediately into the prison, and asked Paul whether he was really a free citizen of Rome ? Being answered in the affirmative, Lyfias said, he had himself procured that great privilege by a large sum of money ; upon which Paul answered, *But I was free-born* †. On receiving this account, Lyfias commanded the centurion not to scourge him, being terrified at what he had already done, namely, his causing to be bound with chains a free denizen of the Roman empire. The next day he ordered his chains to be taken off ; and that he might thoroughly satisfy himself of the cause of so unusual a tumult, convened the members of the Sanhedrim, before whom he conducted Paul, in order to undergo an examination by that tribunal.

Paul was not in the least terrified at the sight of so considerable and powerful an assembly. Without waiting for any questions being asked him, looking earnestly at the council, he coolly said, *Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day* ‡. But however this expression might tend to shew the true

state

* As Lyfias did not understand Hebrew, he could not tell what the purport of St. Paul’s speech to the people was ; but, by their mad and outrageous behaviour, he guessed that he must have said something very provoking, either against the law or the dignity of their nation, and therefore was willing to know the truth of it from himself. Scourging was a method of examination used by the Romans, and other nations, to force such as were supposed guilty to confess what they had done, what were their motives, and who were accessaries to the fact.

† It is probable that Paul’s father might have been rewarded with the freedom of the city for his fidelity and bravery in some military service, emoluments being then conferred, not on those who had most interest with men in power, but on those who had most merit from their actions.

‡ The apostle, by here using the words *a good conscience*, does not mean a conscience void of all error and offence, because he owns himself to have been guilty of a great sin in persecuting the church of Christ, 1 Tim. 1. 13. His meaning

state of his mind, Ananias the high-priest was so offended at it, that he commanded those who stood next him to strike him on the face; at which Paul replied, *God shall smite thee, thou whited wall* §. On this, some of the spectators, looking sternly at Paul, cried out, *Revilest thou God's high-priest?* In answer to this Paul told them, he did not know that Ananias was high-priest, not supposing it possible, that a person who can give such unjust orders could be invested with so sacred a character. But, since it was so, he confessed it was very wrong to revile him, God himself having commanded that *no man should speak evil of the rulers of the people*.

Paul, perceiving that the council consisted partly of Sadducees, and partly of Pharisees (in order to elude the malice of his enemies) made open declaration that he was a Pharisee, even as his father was before him, and that the great offence taken against him was, his belief of a future resurrection. This declaration threw the whole court in confusion, by exciting the regard of the Pharisees, who favoured the doctrine of the resurrection, and incurring the resentment of the Sadducees, who strongly opposed it.

The dissensions between these two sects, on this occasion, arose to such a violent degree, that Lyfias, fearing lest Paul should be torn in pieces between them, commanded the soldiers to take him from the bar, and re-conduct him to the castle. This was accordingly done, and to comfort him after all his frights and fears, God was pleased to appear to him that night in a vision, encouraging him to constancy and resolution, and assuring him that, as he had borne testimony to his cause at Jerusalem, so, in despite of all his enemies, he should live to do the like at Rome. *Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.*

The next morning the Jews, whose envy and malice were increased against Paul by the dilatory proceedings of the Sanhedrim, determined to use a quicker method of putting a period to his life. In order to this about forty of the most turbulent among them entered into a wicked conspiracy, which they ratified with an impre-

cation never to eat or drink, until they had killed Paul. Having formed this inhuman resolution they went to the Sanhedrim and acquainted them with their design, to effect which they advised, that some of the members should solicit Lyfias to bring Paul again before them, under pretence of enquiring more accurately into his case, and that, before he reached the court, they would not fail to way-lay and dispatch him.

This wicked plot was readily approved of by the Sanhedrim, but its execution was happily frustrated by Paul's nephew, who, having discovered their intentions, went immediately to his uncle, to whom he related the whole affair. Paul communicated the intelligence to Lyfias, who immediately commanded two parties of foot, and one of horse, to be ready by nine o'clock, in order to conduct him to Cesarea, where Felix, the Roman governor, then resided. At the same time Lyfias dispatched a letter to Felix, the substance of which was, "that the person whom he had sent to him was a free-man of Rome; that the Jews had ill treated him, and conspired against his life; that the measures he had taken were designed to secure him from the violence of the multitude; and that he had ordered his enemies to appear before him at Cesarea, that he might judge what was the cause of their being so incensed against the person whom he had sent to him under military protection."

The guards, having received these orders from Lyfias, conducted Paul the same night to Antipatris ||, and the next morning to Cesarea. On their arrival there, they immediately gave Lyfias's letter to Felix, who, after having read the contents, asked Paul some questions relative to the place of his birth, and the manner of his life. Finding, by his answers, that Paul was a native of Cilicia, Felix told him, that as soon as his accusers came thither from Jerusalem, he would give him a fair and candid hearing; and, in the mean time, gave orders that he should be secured in that part of his palace called Herod's Hall *, where he should be supplied with every article that was necessary during his confinement.

C H A P.

therefore is, such a conscience as was consistent with the ideas he entertained at different periods of his life, namely, before and after his conversion. The sense, therefore, of this passage may be thus explained: "While I was persuaded that the Christian religion was false, I persecuted it with the utmost vigour; but, as soon as I came to perceive its Divine institution, I declared for it, and have, ever since, maintained it, even to the hazard of my life. The religion of the Jews I did not forsake out of any hardships that it required, or any prejudice I had conceived against its precepts; nor did I embrace that of the Christians upon any other account, than a full conviction of its truth and veracity. I was a good Jew, in short, as long as I thought it my duty to be so; and, when I thought it my duty to be otherwise, I became a zealous Christian; in all which God knows the sincerity of my heart, and is witness of my uprightness."

§ *A whited wall* was a proverbial expression, denoting an hypocrite of any kind, and the propriety of it appears in this—That as the wall had a fair outside, but nothing but

dirt, or sticks, and stones within, so the high-priest had the outward appearance of a righteous judge, sitting as one that would pass sentence according to law, and yet commanding him to be punished for speaking the truth, and so condemning the innocent, contrary to the law of nature, as well as that of Moses. Our Blessed Saviour makes use of a comparison of the same nature, when he calls the scribes and Pharisees *whited sepulchres*. It should be observed, in vindication of St. Paul, that his words, *God shall smite thee*, are a prediction, not an imprecation; and a prediction which Josephus tells us was fulfilled in a short time; for he was murdered in a mutiny.

|| Antipatris was a city on the borders of Samaria, near the Mediterranean Sea; and situated about thirty-eight miles from Jerusalem.

* This was a magnificent palace built by Herod the Great for his own habitation whenever he went to Cesarea; and was afterwards used by the Roman governors for the place of their residence, and for the confinement of some particular persons.

Engraved for Kington's History of the Bible.



The APOSTLE PAUL *before* FELIX.

C H A P. VI.

Paul is taken before Felix, and acquits himself of the accusation laid against him by Tertullus, one of his principal enemies. Felix is terrified at the force of his arguments. Paul is taken before Festus (the successor of Felix) and after answering the accusation laid against him by the Jews, makes an appeal unto Cæsar. He boldly defends himself, and the Christian cause, before Festus and king Agrippa. Is sent to Rome by sea, in the way to which he is shipwrecked, and cast upon the island of Melitus, where he performs several astonishing miracles. He is conducted from thence to Rome, where he is received with the most distinguished respect by the Christians in that city. He confers with the chief of the Jews, to whom he preaches the doctrine of the Gospel with different success. Writes an Epistle to Philemon, a person of distinction at Colosse. Sends Epistles to the Philippians, Ephesians and Colossians. The Epistle of James to the dispersed Tribes, with an account of the sufferings and martyrdom of that apostle.

AFTER Paul had been confined five days at Cæsarea, by order of Felix, there came thither Ananias the high-priest, and several other members of the Sanhedrim, together with Tertullus, a man of great elocution, and an inveterate enemy to Paul. Being all assembled before Felix, Tertullus made a long speech, in which he made use of all the insinuating arts that could arise from human invention to prepossess the Governor in his own favour; having done which he accused Paul “ of being a seditious person, and a disturber of the public peace; who had set himself at the head of the sect of Nazarenes, and made no manner of scruple to profane even the temple itself.” This accusation was altogether false, notwithstanding which it was confirmed by all the members of the Sanhedrim, who had come from Jerusalem on this occasion.

Tertullus having finished his accusation against Paul, Felix told him that he was now at liberty to make his defence; upon which Paul addressed himself to the court in words to this effect:

“ I answer this charge of the Jews with the greater satisfaction before thee, because thou hast for many years been a judge of this nation. About twelve days since, I repaired to Jerusalem, to worship the God of Jacob. But I neither disputed with any man, or endeavoured to stir the people in the synagogues or the city. Nor can they prove the charge they have brought against me.

“ This, however, I readily confess, *that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers*, and according to this faith, I am careful to maintain a clear and quiet conscience, both towards God and man.

“ After I had spent some years in distant countries, I repaired to Jerusalem, with the alms I had collected in other provinces, for the poor of mine own nation, and offerings to the God of Jacob. And while I was performing the duties of religion, certain Asiatic Jews found me in the temple, purified according to the law; but neither attended with a multitude of followers,

or the least tumultuous assembly. It was therefore necessary that these Jews should have been here, if they had any thing to alledge against me. Nay, I appeal to those of the Sanhedrim here present, if any thing has been laid to my charge, except the objections of the Sadducees, who violently opposed me for asserting the doctrine of the resurrection.”

Felix, having thus heard both parties, refused to make any final determination till he had more fully advised about it, and consulted Lysias, the governor of the castle, who was the most proper person to give an account of the cause of the controversy. In the mean time Felix gave orders that, though Paul should be kept under a guard, yet his confinement should be so free and easy, that none of his friends should be hindered from visiting, or doing him any offices of kindness.

A few days after this Felix, being desirous that his wife Drusilla (who had been a Jewess) should hear Paul, he ordered him to be brought before them, and gave him permission to speak freely concerning the doctrines of Christianity. In his discourse he particularly pointed out the great obligation which the laws of Christ laid on mankind to preserve justice and righteousness, sobriety and chastity, both towards themselves and others, more especially from this consideration, viz. the strict and impartial account that must be given, in the day of judgment, of all the actions of their past lives, and the consequences that would inevitably follow, either to be rewarded or eternally punished.

This discourse had such an effect on Felix, that he could not help trembling as he sat on his throne; and, as soon as he had a little recovered his spirits, he abruptly interrupted Paul, by saying, *Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.*

Felix, no doubt, had sufficient reason to tremble, and his conscience to be sensibly alarmed at Paul's discourse; for he was a man notoriously infamous for rapine and violence. He made his own will the law of his government, practising all

all manner of cruelty and injustice. To these bad qualities he added bribery and covetousness; and therefore often sent for Paul to discourse with him, expecting he would have given him a considerable sum for his release, having, in all probability, heard that Paul had taken with him a large quantity of money to Jerusalem. But finding that no offers were made him, either by the apostle or his friends, he kept him prisoner two years; when himself being discharged from his office by Nero, he left Paul in prison, in order to gratify the malice of the Jews*, and engage them to speak the better of him, after his departure from Judea.

On the deposition of Felix the government of Judea was invested in Portius Festus, who, after staying three days at Cesarea, went to Jerusalem. On his arrival thither, the high-priest, and other members of the Sanhedrim, exhibited fresh accusations against Paul, and, in order to his trial, desired that he might be sent for up to Jerusalem, intending to have him assassinated in the way. But Festus, being unwilling to grant their request, told them, that he was shortly going himself to Cesarea, and that if they had any complaint against Paul, they must come thither and accuse him, when he would not fail to do them justice.

In consequence of this the Jews followed Festus to Cesarea, and when he was seated on his throne, they renewed their charge, and produced their articles against Paul, which were much the same as what they had accused him of before Felix. But Paul defended himself so well, by making it appear that he had neither offended against the Jewish laws, nor against the temple, nor against the emperor, that their charge, for want of sufficient proof, fell to the ground. Festus, however, being willing to procure the favour of the Jews at his entrance on the government, asked Paul if he would go and be tried before him at Jerusalem? But the apostle, well knowing the malice of his enemies, and being unwilling to trust himself in their power, boldly declared, "as he then stood at the emperor's judgment-seat, when he ought to have a final trial, if he had done any thing worthy of death, he did not wish to avoid punishment: but that, as he had not injured any of the Jews, and they could not prove any thing against him, he ought not to be made a victim to their fury; and therefore, as he was a Roman, he appealed to the emperor himself†". Festus, finding Paul resolute in maintaining his privilege, conferred for some time with his council, and then, with some seeming emotion, told him that, since he had appealed unto Cæsar, unto Cæsar he should go.

* Felix had greatly exasperated the Jews by his unjust and violent proceedings while he continued in the government; and therefore, upon his dismissal, he thought to have pacified them, in some measure, by leaving Paul (whom he might have discharged long before) still in custody, and consequently still liable to become a prey to their greedy malice. But herein he found himself greatly mistaken; for no sooner was he removed from his office, than several of the principal Jews of Cesarea took a journey to Rome on purpose to accuse him, and would certainly have wrought his ruin, had no

A few days after this king Agrippa (who succeeded Herod in the tetrarchate of Galilee) with his sister Bernice, went to Cesarea, in order to pay a visit to the new governor. Festus took this opportunity of mentioning Paul's case to Agrippa, with the remarkable tumult that had been occasioned by him among the Jews, and the appeal he had made to Cæsar; the whole of which he related in words to this effect: "That Felix, upon his parting with the government of Judea, had left a certain prisoner, against whom some of the chief of the Jews had brought an information, and immediately demanded judgment, which, according to the Roman law, could not be done without first hearing the case, and bringing the parties together. That to this purpose he had ordered his accusers to come to Cesarea, but, upon the result, found that the dispute between them was about matters of religion, and whether a person, called Jesus, was really dead or alive. That, being himself unacquainted with such kind of controversies, he had referred the prisoner to the Jewish Sanhedrim, but that he, declining their judgment, had appealed to Cæsar; and that therefore he kept him still in prison, until he could meet with a convenient opportunity to send him to Rome."

This account given of Paul by Festus greatly excited the curiosity of king Agrippa, who intimated his desire of hearing himself what Paul had to say in his own defence. Accordingly the next day the king and his sister, accompanied by Festus the governor, and several other persons of distinction, went into the court with a pompous and splendid retinue, where the prisoner was brought before them. As soon as Paul appeared Festus informed the court "how greatly he had been importuned by the Jews, both at Cesarea and Jerusalem, to put the prisoner to death as a malefactor; but having, on examination, found him guilty of no capital crime, and the prisoner himself having appealed unto Cæsar, he was determined to send him to Rome. That he was willing, however, to have his cause again discussed before so judicious a person as Agrippa, that he might be furnished with some material particulars to send with him; as it would be highly absurd to send a prisoner without signifying the crimes alleged against him."

Festus having finished his speech, king Agrippa told Paul he was at full liberty to make his own defence; upon which, after silence being called, Paul, chiefly addressing himself to Agrippa, spoke to this effect:

"I consider it as a peculiar happiness, king Agrippa,

his brother Pallas (who was in very distinguished favour with Nero) interceded for his pardon.

† This manner of appealing was very common among the Romans, and introduced to secure the lives and fortunes of the people from the unjust encroachments and over-rigorous severities of the magistrates. Paul well knew he should not have fair and equitable dealings from the governor, when swayed by the Jews, his sworn and inveterate enemies, and therefore appealed from him to the emperor; nor could Festus deny his demand.

“ Agrippa, that I am to make my defence
“ against the accusations of the Jews, before
“ thee; because thou art well acquainted with
“ their customs, and the questions commonly
“ debated among them: I therefore beseech
“ thee to hear me patiently. All the Jews are
“ well acquainted with my manner of life,
“ from my youth, the greatest part of it having
“ been spent with mine own countrymen at Je-
“ rusalem. They also know that I was educa-
“ ted under the institutions of the Pharisees,
“ the strictest sect of our religion, and am now
“ arraigned for a tenet believed by all their fa-
“ thers; a tenet sufficiently credible in itself
“ and plainly revealed in the scriptures, I mean
“ the resurrection of the dead. Why should
“ any mortal think it either incredible or im-
“ possible, that God should raise the dead?

“ I, indeed, thought myself indispensibly
“ obliged to oppose the religion of Jesus of
“ Nazareth. Nor was I satisfied with imprison-
“ ing and punishing with death itself, the saints
“ I found at Jerusalem; I even persecuted them
“ in strange cities, whither my implacable zeal
“ pursued them, having procured authority for
“ that purpose from the chief priests and el-
“ ders.

“ Accordingly, I departed for Damascus,
“ with a commission from the Sanhedrim; but
“ as I was travelling towards that city. I saw at
“ mid-day, O king, a light from heaven, far
“ exceeding the brightness of the sun, encom-
“ passing me and my companions. On seeing
“ this awful appearance, we all fell to the earth;
“ and I heard a voice, which said to me, in the
“ Hebrew language, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest*
“ *thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the*
“ *pricks?* To which I answered, *Who art thou,*
“ *Lord?* And he replied, *I am Jesus, whom*
“ *thou persecutest.* But be not terrified, arise
“ from the earth: for I have appeared unto thee,
“ that thou mightest be both a witness of the
“ things thou hast seen, and also of others which
“ I will hereafter reveal unto thee; my power,
“ delivering thee from the Jews and Gentiles,
“ to whom now I send thee to preach the Gos-
“ pel; to withdraw the veil of darkness and ig-
“ norance: to turn them from falsehood unto
“ truth, and from the power of Satan unto God.

“ Accordingly, king Agrippa, I readily obey-
“ ed the heavenly vision; I preached the Gospel
“ first to the inhabitants of Damascus, then to
“ those of Jerusalem, and Judea, and afterwards
“ to the Gentiles; persuading them to forsake
“ their iniquities, and, by sincere repentance,
“ turn to the living God.

“ These endeavours to save the souls of sinful
“ mortals exasperated the Jews, who caught me
“ in the temple, and entered into a conspiracy to
“ destroy me. But, by the help of Omnipot-
“ ence, I still remain a witness to all the human

“ race, preaching nothing but what Moses and
“ all the prophets foretold; namely, That the
“ Messiah should suffer; be the first that should
“ rise from the chambers of the grave, and pub-
“ lish the glad tidings of salvation, both to the
“ Jews and Gentiles.”

This discourse was conceived in such a light
by Festus, that he thought Paul was delirious,
and therefore abruptly told him, that his too
much learning had made him mad. The reply
Paul made to this was to the following purport:
“ I am far, most noble Festus, from being trans-
“ ported with idle and distracted ideas; the
“ words I speak are dictated by truth and sobri-
“ ety: and I am persuaded that king Agrippa
“ himself is not ignorant of those things; for
“ they were transacted openly before the world.
“ I am confident, king Agrippa, that thou be-
“ lievest the prophets; and therefore must know
“ that all their predictions were fulfilled in
“ Christ.” To this Agrippa answered, “ Thou
“ hast almost persuaded me to become a
“ Christian.” Paul replied, “ I sincerely wish,
“ that not only thou, but also all that hear
“ me, were not *almost*, but *altogether*, the same
“ as myself, except being prisoners.” Upon
this the assembly broke up; and, when Agrip-
pa and Festus had conferred together about
Paul’s case, they freely owned that the accusa-
tion laid against him amounted neither to a capi-
tal offence, nor any thing deserving imprison-
ment; and that, had he not appealed unto Cæ-
sar, he might have been legally discharged*.

It being now finally determined that Paul
should be sent to Rome, he, and some other
prisoners of note, were committed to the charge
of one Julius, a centurion, or captain of a le-
gion called Augustus’s Band. Accordingly they
went on board a ship of Adramyttium†, and,
coasting along Asia, arrived at Sidon, where Ju-
lius (who all along treated Paul with great civi-
lity) gave him leave to go ashore, and refresh him-
self. From Sidon they set sail, and came within
sight of Cyprus, and having passed over the seas
of Cilicia and Pamphylia, landed at Myra, a
port in Lycia, where the ship finished its voyage.
From hence they embarked on board a ship of
Alexandria bound for Italy; and having passed
by Cnidus‡, with some difficulty made for Sa-
lome, a promontory on the Eastern shore of
Crete, from whence, after many days slow sail-
ing, they arrived at a place called the Fair Ha-
vens, on the coast of the same island. As the
season of the year was far advanced, and sailing
in those seas exceeding dangerous, Paul advised
the centurion to put in here, and winter. But
Julius, preferring the judgment of the master of
the ship, and the wind, at that time, blowing
gently at south, they put again to sea, in hopes
of reaching Phenice, another harbour of Crete,
where there was safe riding, and there to winter.

It

* It was the custom of the Romans, that after a prisoner
had appealed unto the emperor, no inferior judge could ei-
ther condemn or acquit him.

† Adramyttium was a sea-port in Mysia, a province of
Asia Minor, lying opposite to the isle of Lesbos, and not far
from Troas.

‡ Cnidus was a city which stood on a promontory, or fore-
land of the same name, in that part of the province of Caria,
which was more particularly called Doris. This city was
remarkable for the worship of Venus, and for the celebrated
statue of that goddess made by the famous artificer Praxi-
teles.

It was not long, however, before they found themselves disappointed; for the calm southerly gale, which blew before, suddenly changed to a stormy and tempestuous north-east wind, which bore down all before it, so that they were forced to let the ship drive; but, to secure it from splitting, they undergirt it, and, to prevent its running aground on the shallows, threw out a great part of its lading and tackle.

In this wretched and dangerous situation did they continue for the space of fourteen days, during which they neither saw sun or stars, so that the whole company (except Paul) began to give themselves up as lost. This being observed by the apostle, he addressed himself to them in words to this effect: "Had you taken my advice, and staid at Crete, you would not have been in this danger; but take comfort, for we shall suffer no loss but that of the ship. This I can assure you has been made known to me by a Divine messenger, who, appearing to me in the night, said, Fear not Paul, for thou must be brought before Cæsar, and God hath, for thy sake, granted life and safety to all them that are with thee in the ship. Wherefore be of good cheer, for I am confident this vision will be made good, coming from God, as it certainly doth. But one passage more I received in this vision, namely, that after shipwreck we shall be cast on a certain island."

On the fourteenth night the sailors, thinking they were near land sounded, and found themselves in twenty fathoms water, soon after which they were convinced, by a second sounding, that they were near some coast. But apprehending that they might strike upon some shelves in the dark, they thought proper to come to an anchor, till the morning might give them better information. In the mean time the weather continuing exceeding boisterous, they altered their intentions, and not staying for day-light, attempted to save themselves by getting into the boat. On this Paul told Julius, "that though he had said no person in the ship should perish, it was upon condition that they believed and trusted in God for their preservation: that therefore the seamen should continue in the ship and do their duty, and not endeavour to effect their escape by the boat; which, if they did they would be all in danger of their lives." Upon this the soldiers, to prevent the seamen's design, cut the ropes that fastened the boat, which was soon driven away by the impetuosity of the waves.

A little before day-break Paul advised all the people on board the ship to take some refreshment, because, during the time of their danger,

which had been fourteen days, they had taken but very little sustenance; and, to encourage them to do this, he assured them again, that *not a hair of their heads should perish*. Having said this, Paul took bread, and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken it, he began to eat. Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat.

In the morning they discovered land, and, discerning a creek, which seemed to make a kind of haven, they resolved, if possible, to put in there; but, in their passage, unexpectedly fell into a place where two seas met, and where the fore-part of the ship striking upon a neck of land that ran cut into the sea, the hinder part was soon beaten in pieces by the violence of the waves. When the soldiers saw what was likely to be their fate, they proposed putting all the prisoners to the sword, lest any of them should swim to land, and make their escape; but the centurion, who was willing to save Paul, not approving of this design, gave orders that every one should shift for himself; the issue of which was, that, some by swimming, others fastening to planks, and others on pieces of the broken ship (to the number of 276 persons) all got safe on shore.

The country on which they were cast was (as Paul had foretold) an island called Melita, now called Malta, situated in the Lybian Sea between Syracuse and Africa. The natives of the place received them with great civility and kindness, made fires to dry their wet clothes, and entertained them with every necessary that was requisite for their distressed situation.

As Paul was laying a few sticks upon the fire, a viper, enlivened by the heat, came out of the bundle of wood from whence he had taken them, and fastened upon his hand. When the natives saw this they concluded that he must certainly be some notorious murderer, who, though Providence had suffered to escape the dangers of the sea, had reserved for a more public and solemn execution. But when they saw him shake off the venomous creature into the fire, and no harm ensue, they changed their sentiments, and cried out, *that he was a god* ||.

At a small distance from that part of the island on which Paul and his company were shipwrecked lived Publius the governor, who received and entertained them with great civility and hospitality for three days. During this time Paul, being informed that the governor's father lay dangerously ill of a fever and bloody flux, in acknowledgment for the favours received from Publius, went to his apartment, and after praying some time, layed his hands upon him and healed him. The news of this miraculous cure

was

§ This island is supposed to have received its name from the great quantity of honey (in Greek called *Meli*) which it produced. It is computed to be about twelve miles broad, and twenty long. It lies distant from Sicily about sixty miles. At present it is called Malta, and is remarkable on account of its being granted to the knights of St. John of Jerusalem (formerly called the knights of Rhodes, but now knights of Malta) by the emperor Charles V. after the Turks had driven them out of Rhodes in the year of Our Lord 1530. These knights, according to the institution, are in number a thousand, of which five hundred are to be resident in the island;

the other five hundred are dispersed through Christendom in their several seminaries, which are in France, Italy and Germany; as there was one also in England, before it was suppressed by king Henry VIII. They are called knights *hospitallers*; from whom many places that formerly belonged to them here in England, do still retain something of their name, by being called in short *spittals*.

|| Hercules was one of the gods whom the people of this island worshipped; and to him they ascribed the power of curing the bite of serpents.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



*The APOSTLE PAUL shaking the VIPER from his HAND,
after being SHIPWRECKED on the Island of Melitar.*

was soon spread throughout the island, in consequence of which such as were afflicted with any disease were brought to Paul, who restored them to their former health and strength. This increased Paul's fame, and was of considerable advantage to his companions and fellow-sufferers, who, on his account, were highly caressed and entertained: and when they left the island they received many marks of esteem from the inhabitants, who furnished them with all necessaries proper for their voyage.

After staying three months at Miletus they embarked on board the *Castor and Pollux*, a ship of Alexandria bound for Italy. On their arrival at Syracuse*, they cast anchor, and went on shore to refresh themselves. Here they stopped three days, when they again embarked, and sailed for Rhegium†, and from thence to Puteoli‡, where they landed. Finding in this place some Christians, at their earnest solicitation, they continued with them a week, and then set forward on their journey to Rome.

When the Christians of Rome heard that Paul was on his journey to that city, great numbers of them went to meet him, some as far as Appii-forum§, and others as far as a place called the Three Taverns||. As soon as Paul saw them he was greatly rejoiced, and thanked God and took courage. They all conducted him in a kind of triumph to the city, on their arrival at which Julius delivered the rest of his prisoners over to the captain of the guard; but Paul was permitted to take up his residence in a private house, with only one soldier to guard him.

After Paul had been at Rome three days he sent for the heads, or rulers of the Jews, in that city, who being assembled, he addressed himself to them in words to this effect: "Men and brethren, though I have done nothing contrary to the laws and customs of the Jews, yet was I by them apprehended and accused before the Roman governor, who, when he had examined me, and found no capital accusation laid by my enemies, would have discharged me. But the Jews opposing it, I was forced to appeal to Cæsar to get out of their hands, not that I had any complaint to make to him

against my countrymen. And this is the cause of my desiring to speak with you; for I am imprisoned, as you see, for teaching the belief and expectation of a future resurrection, which is the result of all the promises of God to the Jews, and that on which every true Israelite depends." The answers the rulers made to this was to the following purport: "We have no letters from Judea that mention thee, neither have the converted Jews made any complaint against thee. But we desire to hear thy opinion more at large; for as concerning this profession and doctrine of Christianity, we know it is generally opposed by our brethren the Jews."

Paul readily complied with this request, and a day being appointed, not only the rulers, but many others of the Jews assembled at his house, to whom he preached from morning till night, explaining the doctrine of the Gospel, and proving, from the promises and predictions of the Old Testament, that Jesus was the true Messiah. But his discourse was attended with different success, some of his hearers being convinced of the truth of what he asserted, while others persisted in their infidelity. In consequence of this warm disputes took place between them; upon which, as they were about to depart, Paul, addressing himself to those who opposed his doctrine, told them that their unbelief was a strict fulfillment of what had been predicted by the prophet Isaiah: *Well (said he) spake the Holy Ghost by Isaiah the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive. For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known, therefore, unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will bear it.* After Paul had said this the whole company departed, disagreeing among themselves on the subject which had been propounded to them.

Paul continued to reside in the house he had hired

* This was a city of Sicily, seated on the east-side of the island, with a fine prospect from every entrance both by sea and land. Its port, which had the sea on both sides of it, was almost all of it environed with beautiful buildings, and all that part of it, which was without the city, was on both sides banked up, and sustained with very fair walls of marble. The city itself, while in its splendor, was the largest and richest that the Greeks possessed in any part of the World. For (according to Strabo) it was twenty-two miles in circumference; and both Livy and Plutarch informs us, that the spoil of it was equal to that of Carthage. It was called quadruplex, as being divided into four parts, Acradino, Tyche, Neapolis, and the island of Ortygia. The first of these contained in it the famous temple of Jupiter; the second, the temple of Fortune; the third, a large Amphitheatre, and a wonderful statue of Apollo in the midst of a spacious square; and the fourth, the two temples of Diana and Minerva, and the renowned fountain of Arethusa. About two hundred and ten years before the Birth of Christ, this city was taken and sacked by Marcellus, the Roman general, and, in storming the place, Archimedes, the great Mathematician, who is esteemed the first inventor of the sphere, and who, during the siege, had sorely galled the Romans with his military engines, was slain by a common soldier, while he was intent

upon his studies. After it was thus destroyed by Marcellus, Augustus rebuilt that part of it which stood upon the island, and, in time, it so far recovered itself as to have three walls, three castles, and a marble gate, and to be able to send out twelve thousand horse, and four hundred ships. But it was totally destroyed by the Saracens in 884, and scarce any vestiges of it are now to be seen.

† *Rhegium*, now called Reggio, was a port town in Italy, opposite to Messina in the island of Sicily; it is thought to have this name given it by the Greeks, who suppose, that about this place Sicily was broken off from the continent of Italy by the sea.

‡ *Puteoli* was a noted town for trade, which lay not far from Naples; it was famous for its hot baths: and from these baths, or pits of water, called in Latin *putei*, the town is said to have taken its name.

§ *Appii-forum* was an antient city of the Volsci, about 50 miles distant from Rome: and is thought to have had its name from the statue of Appius Claudius the Roman censor here erected, who paved the famous way from Rome to Capua.

|| *The three taverns* was another place which stood upon the Appian way, about thirty miles distant from Rome.

hired for the space of two years, during which he employed himself in expounding the doctrine of the Gospel to all who came to him. He preached daily without the least molestation, and with such success, that many people of distinction (some of whom were of the emperor's court) were converted, and became his constant disciples.

Among others of the apostle's converts at Rome was one Onesimus, who, some time before, had been servant to Philemon, a person of distinction at Colosse*. Onesimus, having committed some indiscretion, left his master, and rambled as far as Rome. where, hearing Paul preach, he conceived such an idea of the truth of his doctrine, that he became a most serious convert. Paul, however, understanding that he was another man's servant, advised him to return to his master, which he readily agreeing to, Paul sent an epistle by him to Philemon, in which he "earnestly requests that he will pardon him, and, notwithstanding his former faults, treat him as a brother; promising withal, that if he had wronged, or owed him any thing, he himself would not fail to repay it." This epistle may be considered as a masterpiece of eloquence in the persuasive way; for the apostle has therein had recourse to all the considerations which friendship, religion, piety and tenderness can inspire, to reconcile an incensed master to an indiscreet servant.

The Christians of Philippi having heard of Paul's imprisonment at Rome, and not knowing to what distress he might be reduced, raised a contribution for him, and sent it by Epaphroditus their bishop. This gave great satisfaction to Paul, not so much on account of the money they had sent, but, from its being a proof that they still retained Christian principles. To encourage them, therefore, to persevere in the faith of Christ, and to withstand all opposition that might be made against them by the enemies of the Gospel, he returned them an Epistle, "wherein he gives some account of the state of his affairs at Rome; gratefully acknowledges their kindness to him; and warns them against the dangerous opinions which the Judaizing teachers might vent against them. He likewise advises them to live in continual obedience to Christ; to avoid disputations, delight in prayer, be courageous under affliction, united in love, and clothed in humility, in imitation of the Blessed Jesus, who so far humbled himself, as to become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Paul had lived three years at Ephesus, preaching the Gospel to the numerous inhabitants of that city, and was therefore well acquainted with

the state and condition of the place; so that taking the opportunity of Tychicus's going thither from Rome, he wrote his Epistle to the Ephesians, wherein "he endeavours to countertermine the principles and practices both of the Jews and Gentiles; to confirm them in the belief and practices of the Christian doctrine; and to instruct them fully in the great mysteries of the Gospel; their redemption and justification by the death of Christ; their gratuitous election, their union with the the Jews in one body, of which Christ is the head, and the glorious exaltation of that head above all creatures both spiritual and temporal; together with many excellent precepts, both as to the general duties of religion, and the duties of their particular relations."

Paul himself had never been at Colosse; but one Epaphras, who was at that time a prisoner with him at Rome, had preached the Gospel there with good success, and from him he learnt that certain false teachers had endeavoured to corrupt the minds of the Christians in that city. In opposition to this, and to secure the converts in their faith, he wrote his Epistle to the Colossians, wherein "he beautifully sets forth the Messiah, and all the benefits that will be bestowed on such as believe in Him, as being the image of his Father, the Redeemer of all mankind, the reconciler of all things to God, and the head of the church, which gives life and vigour to all its members. He commends the doctrine preached to them by Epaphras, and exhorts them not to be led away by the reasonings of human philosophy. And concludes with giving them a list of many chief and principal duties of a Christian life, especially such as respect the relations of husband and wives, parents and children, masters and servants."

During the time Paul was thus laudably employed at Rome, James the apostle, and bishop of Jerusalem, was dedicating his time, as much as in him lay, to the propagation of the Gospel within his provinces. Considering within himself that it belonged to his Apostolical office to take care of all the converted among the twelve tribes of Israel, wherever dispersed, he wrote an Epistle to them, which, among those that are called Catholic†, is placed first in the sacred canon. The design of James, in writing this Epistle was, "to confute and suppress a dangerous error then growing up in the church, viz. that a bare *naked faith* was sufficient to secure mens salvation, without any attention to good works; to comfort Christians under the persecutions, which were going to be raised against them by worldly powers; and to awaken

* This was a great city of Phrygia in Asia Minor, built by the river Lycus, near the place (as Herodius informs us) where it begins to run under ground, as it does for five furlongs before it rises again, and empties itself into the Meander. This city was situated at an equal distance between Laodicea and Hierapolis, and therefore we find St. Paul (in his Epistle to the Colossians, Chap. iv. 13.) making mention of the inhabitants of all these three cities together; which (according to the account of Eusebius) were all destroyed by

an earthquake, in the tenth year of the emperor Nero.

† This Epistle of St. James, with the two of St. Peter, three of St. John, and that of Jude, obtained the name of *Catholic*, from their being directed (not as St. Paul's were to any particular church) but to all the faithful wherever dispersed. Their being, therefore, only in the nature, as it were, of circular letters, was the reason why it was some time before they were admitted into the canon of the church.

“awaken them out of their stupidity, when judgments were ready to overtake them.” To this purpose he inserts, in his Epistle, many excellent exhortations, such as, “to bear afflictions, to hear the word of God, to mortify their passions, to bridle their tongues, to avoid cursing and swearing, and to adorn their Christian profession with a good conversation, with meekness, peaceableness and charity.”

It was not long after James had written this Epistle, before a period was put to all his labours. The governing part of the Jews, being highly enraged at the disappointment they had met with in Paul’s appealing to Cæsar, were now resolved to revenge it upon James; accordingly, taking the opportunity of the death of Festus (before the arrival of Albinus his successor) Ananias the high-priest summoned James, and some others, before the Sanhedrim, who required them to renounce their Christian faith. Their desire more especially was, that James should make his renunciation in the most public manner, and therefore they carried him up to the battlements of the temple, and threatened to throw him down from thence in case he refused complying with their request. But James, instead of gratifying their desires, began himself to confess, and to exhort others to confess, the faith of Christ, in the presence of those who came to hear his recantation; upon which the members of the Sanhedrim were so incensed that they ordered him to be thrown down headlong from the place where he stood. By this fall he was greatly bruised, but not quite killed; and therefore, having recovered himself so far as to be able to rise on his knees, he prayed fervently to heaven for his persecutors, in the manner of the proto-martyr Stephen. But malice is too diabolical to be pacified with kindness, or satisfied with cruelty. Accordingly, his enemies, vexed that they had not fully accomplished their work,

poured a shower of stones upon him while he was imploring their forgiveness at the throne of grace, and one of them, more cruel and inveterate than the rest, put an end to his misery, by dashing out his brains with a fuller’s club*.

Thus did this great and good man finish his course in the 96th year of his age, and about twenty-four years after Our Blessed Saviour’s ascension into heaven. His remains were deposited in a tomb, which he had caused to be made on the Mount of Olives; and his brother Simon was, by the general voice of the Christians, appointed his successor in the bishopric of Jerusalem.

The apostle James was a man of exemplary piety and devotion. Prayer was his daily business and delight: so constant was he at his devotions that his knees became hard and callous; and so prevalent in his petitions to heaven, that, in a time of great drought, he prayed for rain and obtained it. Nor was his charity to his fellow-creatures less than his piety towards God; he did good to all, watched over the souls of men, and made their eternal welfare his constant study. He was of a remarkable meek and humble temper, honouring what was excellent in others, but concealing what was valuable in himself. The dignity of the place he so worthily filled could not induce him to entertain lofty thoughts of himself above his brethren: on the contrary, he strove to conceal whatever might place him in a higher rank than the other disciples of the Lord of Glory. He was the delight of all good men, and so much in the favour and estimation of the people, that they used to flock after him, and strive who should touch even but the hem of his garment. In short, he was a man of so amiable a temper as to be the wonder of the age in which he lived; and from the reputation of his holy and religious life, was stiled *James the Just*.

* The perpetrators of this barbarous act were considered in the most detestable light by the sober and just persons among the Jews themselves. Even their own historian Josephus could not but condemn it, and (as himself testifies) all the honest and conscientious people of the city remon-

strated against it, both to their king Agrippa, and to the Roman governor Albinus; insomuch that the high-priest, by whose authority it was committed, was, in a few months after, degraded, and another placed in his stead.



C H A P. VII.

Paul, after being confined more than two years at Rome, obtains his liberty, and writes his Epistle to the Hebrews. He travels into Spain and other western parts, and then returning eastward, goes to Judea. Account of the Travels and preaching of Peter, with his conquest over Simon Magus, the noted forcerer. Peter and Paul are committed to prison by order of the emperor Nero, who raises the first general persecution against the Christians. Account of Paul's farther travels, with his first Epistle to Timothy, and another to Titus. He returns to Rome, and, with Peter, is again committed to prison. Paul writes his second Epistle to Timothy. Both suffer martyrdom at Rome, the one being crucified, and the other beheaded.

AFTER Paul had continued at Rome upwards of two years, in a state of confinement, he obtained his liberty, but by what means we have not any account in history. It may be presumed that, the Jews not having sufficient proof of the accusation they had laid against him, or being informed that what they alledged was no violation of any Roman law, they durst not implead him before the emperor; and therefore, of course, he was permitted to go at large.

Paul, having obtained his liberty, left Rome, and travelled into various parts of Italy, preaching the Gospel with different success. In some places he made many converts, but in others he met with great opposition. Before he left Italy, he wrote his famous and most elaborate Epistle to the Hebrews, that is, to the converted Jews who dwelt in Jerusalem and its neighbourhood. His main design, in this Epistle, is, “to magnify Christ, and the religion of the Gospel, above Moses and the Jewish æconomy, that, by this means, he may the better establish the converted Jews in the belief and profession of Christianity. To this purpose he represents Our Saviour, in his Divine nature, far superior to all angels, and all created beings; and, in his mediatorial capacity, a greater lawgiver than Moses; a greater priest than Aaron; and a greater king and priest than Melchisedec. He informs them, that the ceremonies, the sacrifices, and the observances of the law, could have no virtue in themselves, but only as they were Types of Jesus Christ; and, being now accomplished in his person, and by his ministry, were finally and totally abolished. He insists upon the necessity of faith, and, by the examples of the patriarchs and prophets, proves, that justification is to be had no other way, than by the merits of a dying Saviour. And lastly, he lays before them the many excellent precepts for the regulation of their

lives; exhortations to trust and confidence in Christ, in all their sufferings; and strict cautions against apostacy from his religion, even in the hottest persecutions.”

A short time after Paul had written this Epistle to the Hebrews, he left Italy, and, accompanied by Timothy, prosecuted his long intended journey into Spain; and, according to the testimony of several writers, crossed the sea, and preached the Gospel in Britain †. What success he had in these western parts is not known: however, after going from one place to another for the space of eight or nine months, he returned against eastward, visited Sicily, Greece and Crete (at the latter of which places he constituted Titus bishop of the island) and then went into Judea, where we shall for the present leave him, in order to take some notice of Peter, his fellow-labourer in the cause of Christ.

In what manner Peter employed his time; after his escape out of prison, we have not any certain account. It is, however, generally agreed, that about the second year of the emperor Claudius, he went to Rome, and there continued for some time, till at length that emperor, taking advantage of some seditions and tumults raised by the Jews, published an edict for banishing all the Jews from that city; in consequence of which Peter returned to Jerusalem. After staying some time in the capital of Judea, he visited the several churches which he had planted in the East, and carried the glad tidings of the Gospel into Africa, Sicily, Italy, and even as far as Britain, in all which places he brought over great numbers to the Christian faith.

Having thus propagated the Gospel in the Western, as well as the Eastern parts of the world, Peter, towards the latter end of the reign of Nero, returned to Rome, the Jews, after the death of Claudius, being permitted to reside in that city with the same freedom as before that emperor

† Clemens, in his famous Epistle to the Corinthians, expressly tells us, that, being a preacher, both to the East and West, he taught righteousness to the whole World, and went to the utmost bounds of the West; and Theodoret and others inform us, that he preached not only in Spain, but

went to other nations, and brought the Gospel into the isles of the sea, by which he undoubtedly means Britain: and therefore he elsewhere reckons the Gauls and Briton, among the people, whom the apostles, and particularly Paul, persuaded to embrace the doctrine of Christ.



The BURNING of the CITY of ROME
*by order of the Emperor Nero, who saw the Conflagration
from the top of the Tower of Maccenas, & played on his Harp
while the City was in Flames; after which he laid the blame
upon the Christians, which caused the first General persecution.*

emperor issued his edict for their banishment. On Peter's arrival, at Rome he met with his fellow-labourer Paul, who had just returned thither from Judea. The two apostles found the minds of the people strangely bewitched, and hardened against the doctrines of the Gospel, by the subtilties and magical arts of Simon Magus, whom Peter had severely chastised for his wickedness at Samaria. This monster of impiety not only opposed the preaching of the apostles, but likewise did all in his power to render them and their doctrine odious to the emperor. Peter, foreseeing that the calumnies of Simon and his adherents would be injurious to the cause of his great Master, thought himself obliged to oppose him with all his might; and having discovered the vanity of his impostures in several remarkable instances †, he at length worked him up to such a pitch of madness and desperation, that, to give the people an evident demonstration of his having those supernatural powers he had pretended, he promised that, on such a day, he would ascend visibly up into heaven. Accordingly, at the time appointed, when prodigious numbers of people were assembled to behold so extraordinary a sight, he went up to the summit of a mount, from whence he raised himself, and, by the assistance of some magic arts, seemed as if he was flying towards the regions of heaven. Peter and Paul, beholding the delusion, had recourse to prayers, and obtained their petitions of the Almighty, namely, that the impostor should be soon discovered, for the honour

of the Blessed Jesus. Accordingly, he fell headlong to the ground, and was so bruised by the fall, that, in a short time, he expired.

The emperor Nero was a professed patron of magicians, and therefore, when he heard of this event, he was greatly irritated. He had a particular dislike to the doctrine of Christianity, as being totally repugnant to the lusts and passions which he indulged; and was highly offended at Peter for having made so many converts, among whom were several persons of distinction. In consequence of this he ordered him and Paul to be apprehended and cast into prison, soon after which an event § occurred, from whence he took the opportunity of shewing his resentment to the Jews, and that in the most severe manner. He issued out an edict, ordering the Christian Jews to be persecuted in every part of his empire; in consequence of which all orders and degrees of people were treated with the greatest contempt and cruelty that could be invented.

But before the burning of the city, and the persecution commenced against the Christians, in consequence of Nero's edict, both Peter and Paul made their escape from confinement. Peter continued at Rome, but Paul left it, and went into Judea, where he staid some time, after which he went into Asia, and met Timothy at Ephesus. From hence he paid a visit to the Colossians, whom he had never before seen, and after staying with them some time returned to Ephesus, and excommunicated Hymeneus || and Alexander, for denying the resurrection of the dead,

† Cave, in his Lives of the Apostles, mentions one of these instances as related by Hegeippus the Younger, who was cotemporary with St. Ambrose. "There was (says that writer) in Rome, a gentleman of some note, a kinsman to the emperor, who had lately died. In consequence of this, those who knew St. Peter's power in working miracles, advised his friends to send for him, and others likewise prevailed, that Simon the magician might be sent for. Glad of this occasion to magnify himself before the people, Simon proposed to Peter, that, if he raised the man to life, Peter, who had reviled *the mighty power of God* (as he styled himself) should lose his life; but that, if Peter prevailed, he would submit to the same penalty. Peter accepted the challenge; and, when Simon began his charms and enchantments, the dead body seemed to move his hand: whereupon the people who stood by, thinking that the person was alive, were going to fall foul on Peter, for daring to oppose so great a power. But Peter, intreating their patience, desired only that the magician might be removed from the bed-side; which, when they had so done, the deception vanished, and the body remained without the least sign of motion. Then Peter, standing at a good distance from the bed, silently made his addresses to heaven, and when he had so done, in the presence of them all, commanded the man, in the name of the Lord Jesus, to arise, which he instantly did; so that the people changing their minds, were going to stone the magician, but that Peter interposed for his life, by telling them, that it would be punishment enough to him to live, and see, that in despite of all his power and malice, the kingdom of Christ would increase and flourish."

§ The emperor Nero, in the former part of his reign, governed with tolerable credit to himself; but in the latter part he gave way to the greatest extravagance of temper, and to the most atrocious barbarities. The event above alluded to is this. Among other diabolical whims he took it into his head to order, that the city of Rome should be set on fire, which was done by his officers, guards, and servants, accordingly. While the imperial city was in flames, he went up to the tower of Macenas, played upon his harp,

sung the song of the burning of Troy, and openly declared, "that he wished the ruin of all things before his death." Among the noble buildings burnt was the Circus, or place appropriated to horse-races: it was half a mile in length, of an oval form, with rows of seats rising above each other, and capable of receiving, with ease, upwards of 100,000 spectators. Besides this noble pile, many other palaces and houses were consumed; several thousands perished in the flames, were smothered with the smother, or buried beneath the ruins.

This dreadful conflagration continued nine days; when Nero, finding that his conduct was greatly blamed, and a severe odium cast upon him, determined to lay the whole upon the Christians, at once to excuse himself, and have an opportunity of glutting his sight with new cruelties. This was the occasion of the first persecution; and the barbarities exercised upon the Christians were such as even excited the commiseration of the Romans themselves. Nero even refined upon cruelty, and contrived all manner of punishments for the Christians that the most infernal imagination could design. In particular, he had some sewed up in the skins of wild beasts, and then worried by dogs till they expired; and others dressed in shirts made stiff with wax, fixed to axle-trees, and set on fire in his gardens in order to illuminate them. This persecution was general throughout the whole of the Roman empire; but it rather increased than diminished the spirit of Christianity.

|| This Hymeneus was, very probably, a citizen of Ephesus, who, being converted by St. Paul's first sermons, fell afterwards into the heresy of those, who denied the resurrection of the body, and affirmed, that there was no other resurrection, than that of the soul, which, by faith and baptism, is revived from sin to grace. The Alexander, who was his colleague in this heresy, was doubtless the copper-smith whom St. Paul, in his second Epistle to Timothy, so loudly complains of, as greatly obstructing the good effects of his preaching, chap. iv. 14. but whether it was the same Alexander, who would have addressed himself to the multitude, which Demetrius, the silversmith of Ephesus, had drawn together, Acts xix. 24. is a matter of some doubt. However this be, it is certain, that their notion of no other resurrection

dead, and other articles of the Christian faith. From Ephesus he went into Macedonia, but previous to his departure, enjoined Timothy (whom he had constituted bishop of Ephesus *) constantly to reside in that city, and to take the charge of all the Pro-consular Asia.

After Paul had visited several places in Macedonia, he went to Philippi †, where he staid some time, during which he daily preached to the people, made many new converts, and farther established those who had before embraced the faith in the principles of Christianity. Before he left Macedonia he wrote his first Epistle to Timothy, in which " he lays down the duties and " qualifications of a bishop, as well in respect of " his ministry, as of his private conversation, " and instructs him in the office of a true Christian pastor."

Leaving Macedonia, Paul directed his course to Nicopolis, a populous city situated on the banks of the Danube, where he took up his winter quarters. During his stay here he wrote his Epistle to Titus at Crete; wherein " he describes to him (as he had done to Timothy) the " qualifications which a bishop ought to have, " and more especially a bishop of Crete, where " some sharpness and severity was necessary " amidst a people of their perverse and obstinate " tempers. He admonishes him not to suffer " the flock, committed to his charge, to be led " away by the delusions of Judaism; and lastly, " lays down precepts for people in all conditions " of life, even not forgetting servants, because " Our Blessed Saviour has poured out his grace " upon all men."

In the beginning of the spring Paul left Nicopolis, and went to Corinth. After staying a short time here, he crossed the sea into Asia, and went to Ephesus, and from thence proceeded to Miletum. From Miletum he travelled northward to Troas, and lodged with Carpus, one of his disciples, where he left his cloak ‡, some books, and other articles. From Troas he went to Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, where he suffered those persecutions and afflictions, of which he makes mention to Timothy, and thanks God for his deliverance from them §.

After visiting these, and many other places, Paul went again to Rome, knowing that the persecution which had taken place in that city, in consequence of the edict issued by Nero, was somewhat abated. Meeting with Peter, they conjunctively used their utmost endeavours to instruct the Jews in their synagogues, and to convert the Gentiles in all public places and assemblies. This, however, soon raised the malice and indignation of the magistrates, who were still inflamed against the Jews. Nero was at that time in Greece, and had left Helius to supply

his place during his absence, investing him with exorbitant powers, which he exercised with the most unbounded rigour. It was a crime sufficient for these two apostles (in the eyes of Helius) that they were Christians. The particular prejudice he took against Peter was, his having defeated Simon Magus; and that against Paul, his having converted one of the emperor's concubines. He therefore ordered them both to be apprehended and committed to prison, where they spent their time in the most solemn acts of devotion, and, as opportunity offered, preached the Gospel to their guards and fellow prisoners, among whom it is said they converted Processus and Martinian, two principal officers of the army.

While they were in prison Peter wrote his second general epistle to the converted Jews, who were dispersed in the several provinces of Asia. In this epistle " he endeavours, by earnest exhortations " to prevail with them to persevere in the doctrine which they had received, and to testify " the soundness and sincerity of their faith by a " Christian life. He forewarns them of the false " teachers that would shortly spring up among " them, foretells their sad and miserable destruction, and describes them by their odious characters that they may avoid them. He vindicates the doctrine of Christ's coming to judgment, which the heretics of those times denied, that thereby they might encourage men " the more securely to pursue their lewd courses. " And lastly, he describes the *great and terrible day of the Lord*, when the *elements shall melt*, " and the whole frame of nature be dissolved, " thereby to excite them to become circumspect " and diligent, in order to be *found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless*."

Much about the same time that Peter wrote this epistle to the converted Jews in Asia, Paul wrote his second epistle to Timothy, wherein " he informs him of the near approach of his " death, and desires him to come to him before " winter, because most of his companions, upon " one affair or other, were departed from him. " He exhorts him to discharge all the duties of " a bishop and pastor, suitable to those excellent " gifts he had received, and with a generous " contempt of the world, and wordly things. " He admonishes him, not to forget the doctrine " which he had taught him, nor to be surprised " or disturbed at the apostacy of some from the " faith, but to preach the more zealously against " such opposers, as placed their confidence in " those teachers, who left the truth to turn unto " fables. And lastly, he informs him, how, at " his first appearing before Helius, all his companions, for fear of being involved in his " punishment, *forsook him*, but that *the Lord* " stood

resurrection than a spiritual one, was destructive of the very foundations of Christianity, which are laid in the hopes of a resurrection from the dead; and therefore the apostle thought it expedient to have them excommunicated, i. e. separated from the society of the faithful, and deprived of the privileges of being present at religious assemblies, of partaking of the Lord's Supper, and joining in such other holy

offices, as linked Christians together in one and the same society and communion.

* See 1 Tim. i. 3.

† See Philip i. 25, 26.

‡ See 2 Tim. iv. 13.

§ 2 Tim. iii. 4.

*“ stood by him, and strengthened him, to make his
“ preaching more conspicuous and effectual to the
“ Gentiles.”*

When the two apostles had been in confinement about eight months, the cruel Nero returned from Greece, and entered Rome in triumph. Soon after his return it was ultimately resolved, that the two apostles should be put to death. Peter, as a Jew and foreigner, was sentenced to be crucified; and Paul, as a Roman citizen, to be beheaded. On the 29th of June (as it is generally supposed) these sentences were put in execution. Peter, after being first scourged, according to the Roman custom, was taken from the prison, and led to the top of the Vatican Mount near the Tiber, where he was sentenced to surrender up his life on the cross. On his arrival at the place of execution, he begged the favour of the officers that he might not be crucified in the common manner, but with his head downwards, *thinking himself unworthy to suffer in the same posture in which his Lord and Master had suffered before him.* This request was accordingly complied with; and in this manner did the great apostle Peter resign his soul into the hands of Him who came down from heaven to ransom mankind from destruction, and open for them the gates of the heavenly Canaan.

While Peter was suffering on the top of the Vatican Mount, his fellow-apostle Paul was conducted to a place called *Aquæ Salvæ*, about three miles from Rome, in order to undergo the punishment denounced against him by the cruel Nero. In his way he converted three of the soldiers who were sent to guard him to his execution, and who, within a few days after, died martyrs themselves. As soon as Paul arrived at the place of execution, he knelt down, and after praying for some time with the greatest fervency, cheerfully gave up his neck to the fatal stroke; quitting this vale of misery in hopes of passing to the blissful regions of immortality, to the kingdom of his beloved Master, the Great Redeemer of the human race.

Thus died these two most eminent apostles of Jesus Christ, after they had, with indefatigable labour, reaped a glorious harvest of infinite numbers of souls, and triumphantly propagated salvation through the then most considerable parts of the world.

The body of Peter, being taken from the cross, was embalmed after the Jewish manner by Marcellinus the Presbyter, and buried in the Vatican near the Triumphal Way. Over his grave a small church was afterwards erected, which being, in the course of time, destroyed, his body was removed to the cemetery in the Appian Way, two miles distant from Rome. Here it continued till the time of pope Cornelius, when it was re-conveyed to the Vatican, where it abode in some obscurity, till Constantine the Great, from the profound reverence he had for the Christian religion, having re-built and enlarged the Vatican to the honour of St. Peter, enriched it with gifts and ornaments, which, in every age, increased in splendor and beauty, till it became one of the wonders of the world, and in that light was considered for many years after.

The remains of Paul were deposited in the Via

Ostiensis, about two miles from Rome. Constantine the Great, at the instance of Pope Sylvester, built a stately church over his grave, which he adorned with an hundred marble columns, and beautified with the most exquisite workmanship.

It may not be improper, before we part with these two great apostles, to mention some particulars relative to their persons and characters. And first,

St. Peter (according to the description given of him by Nicephorus) was of a middle size, but somewhat slender, and inclining to tallness: his complexion was very pale; his hair thick and curled; his eyes black; his eye-brows thin; and his nose large, but not sharp. With respect to his disposition, if we consider him as a man, there seems to have been a natural eagerness predominant in his temper, which animated his soul to the most bold and sometimes rash undertakings. It was this, in a great measure, that prompted him to be so very forward to speak, and to return answers sometimes before he had well considered them. It was this that made him expose his person to the most imminent dangers, promise those great things in behalf of his master, resolutely draw his sword in his quarrel against a whole band of soldiers, and wound a servant of the high-priest; nay, he had, in all probability, attempted greater things, had not his Lord restrained his impetuosity, and given a seasonable check to his fury.

If we consider him as a disciple of the blessed Jesus, we shall find him exemplary in the great duties of religion. His humility and lowliness of mind were remarkable. With what a passionate earnestness on the conviction of a miracle, did he beg of our blessed Saviour to depart from him; thinking it unworthy the Son of God to come near so vile a sinner!

When the great Redeemer of mankind, by that amazing condescension, stooped so low as to wash the feet of his disciples, Peter could not be persuaded to admit his performing it, thinking it highly improper that so great a person should submit to such a servile office towards a person so mean as himself; nor could he be induced to admit of it till his great Master threatened to deprive him of his favour.

When Cornelius, the Roman centurion, would have treated him with more than ordinary marks of esteem and veneration, he was so far from complying with it, that he declared he was nothing more than a mortal like himself.

His love and zeal for his master were remarkable; he thought he could never express either at too high a rate; venturing on the greatest perils, and exposing his life to the most imminent dangers. His forwardness to own his great Master for the Messiah and Son of the Most High, was remarkably great; and it was this that drew from his Lord that honourable encomium, *Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona.*

But his distinguished courage and constancy in confessing Christ, even before his most inveterate enemies, was still greater, after he had recovered himself from his fall. How plainly does he tell the Jews that they were the murderers and

crucifiers of the Lord of Glory? Nay, with what an undaunted courage, with what an heroic greatness of soul, did he tell the very Sanhedrim, who had sentenced and condemned him, that they were guilty of his death, and that they had no other way of escaping the vengeance of the Almighty, but by the merits of that very Jesus, whom they had crucified and put to death.

Lastly, if we consider him as an apostle, as a pastor, or shepherd of the souls of men, we shall find him faithful and diligent in his office, zealously endeavouring to instruct the ignorant, reduce the erroneous, strengthen the weak, confirm the strong, reclaim the vicious, and turn the children of men into the paths of righteousness. He never omitted any opportunity of preaching to the people, and spreading the glad tidings of the Gospel among the human race; and so powerful were his discourses, that he brought over many thousands of converts. How many painful journeys and dangerous voyages did he undertake! with what unconquerable patience did he endure the greatest trials, surmount every difficulty, and remove every disposition, that he might circulate and establish the Gospel of his beloved Master! Never refusing even to lay down his life to promote it. Nor was he assiduous only to perform these duties himself; but was also careful to animate others to do the like, earnestly pressing and persuading the pastors and governors of the church *to feed the flock of God*, to labour freely for the good of the souls of men, and not undertake those offices to acquire advantages to themselves; beseeching them to treat the flock committed to their care with lenity and gentleness, and to be themselves shining examples of piety and religion, the surest method of rendering their ministry successful. And because it was impossible for him to be always present, to teach and warn the children of men, he endeavoured, by letters, to imprint in their minds the practice of what they had been taught—a method he tells us he was resolved to pursue, as long as he continued an inhabitant of this world; *thinking it meet, while he was in this tabernacle, to stir up, by putting them in mind of these things; that so they might be able, after his decease, to have them always in remembrance.*

Thus lived, thus died Simon Peter, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, and at length to offer up his life in ratification of the doctrine he delivered and the faith he maintained and propagated.

St. Paul was, in person, of a low and small stature, somewhat stooping: his complexion was fair; his countenance grave; his head small; his eyes sparkling; his nose high and bending; and his hair thick and dark, but mixed with grey. His constitution was weak, and he was often subject to distempers; but his mind was strong, and he possessed a solid judgment, quick discernment, and prompt memory, all which were improved by the advantages of a liberal education. His humility and self-abasement were wonderful; his sobriety and temperance singularly strict; and his contempt for the world great and generous. His kindness and charity were remarkable: he had a quick sense of the wants of others, and a most compassionate tenderness for all who were in distress. To what place soever he went, it was always one of his first cares to make provision for the poor, and to stir up the

bounty of the rich and wealthy in their behalf. But his charity to the souls of men was infinitely greater, fearing no dangers, refusing no labours, going through good and evil report, that he might gain men over to the knowledge of the truth, take them out of the crooked paths and place them in the strait way that leadeth to life eternal.

Nor was his charity to men greater than his zeal to God, labouring, with all his might, to promote the honour of his Master. When he was at Athens, and saw the people of that city involved in the grossest superstition and idolatry, and giving that honour which was due to God alone, to statues and images, his zeal was fired and he could not help letting them know the resentment of his mind, and how greatly they dishonoured God, the great Maker and Preserver of the world.

Through the course of an extensive ministry, he never suffered himself to be interrupted in his endeavours for propagating the Gospel by the dangers and difficulties he met with, or the troubles and oppositions that were raised against him. This will evidently appear if we take a survey of the trials and sufferings he underwent; some part whereof are thus briefly summed up by himself: *In labours abundant, in stripes above measure, in death oft; thrice beaten with rods, once stoned, thrice suffered shipwreck, a night and a day in the deep. In journeying often, in perils of water, in perils by his countrymen, in perils by the heathens, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst: in fastings often; in cold and nakedness, and besides those things that were without, which daily came upon him, the care of all the churches.* 2 Cor. xi. 23, &c. An account, tho' very great, yet far short of what he endured. He did not want for solicitations both from Jews and Gentiles; and might, doubtless, in some measure, have made his own terms, would he have been false to his trust, and quitted that way which was then every where spoken against. But alas! those things weighed little with our apostle, who counted not his life dear unto him, so that he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus. And therefore, when he found himself under the sentence of death, he could triumphantly say, *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.*

In short, he was a man in whom the grace of God was displayed with peculiar lustre, and who gave the most convincing proof that the influence of Gospel principles exceed all moral and legal obligations.

The Gospel 'tis which streaks the morning bright,
'Tis this which gilds the horrors of the night.
When wealth forsakes us, or when friends are few;
When friends are faithless, or when foes pursue;
'Tis this which wards the blow, or stills the smart,
Disarms affliction, or repels its dart;
Within the breast bids purest raptures rise,
Bids awful conscience spread her cloudless skies.
When the storm thickens, and the thunders roll,
When the earth trembles to th' affrighted pole,
The virtuous mind, nor doubts, nor fears assail,
For storms are zephyrs, or a gentler gale;
But when disease obstructs the lab'ring breath,
When the pulse thickens, and each gasp is death,
E'en then religion shall sustain the just,
Grace their last moments, nor desert their dust.

C H A P. VIII.

Containing an Account of the Transactions, Travels, Persecutions and Sufferings of St. ANDREW, St. JAMES THE GREAT, St. JOHN THE EVANGELIST, St. PHILIP, and the other Apostles, Evangelists and Disciples of Christ, who, after Our Lord's ascension into heaven, spent their time in labouring to propagate the Gospel in different parts of the world; most of whom suffered martyrdom for the cause of their Great Lord and Master.

IN the preceding Chapters we have given a minute detail of the transactions of those two great apostles Peter and Paul, as related by the Evangelist St. Luke; together with an account of the persecutions and sufferings of St. Stephen, and St. James the Less, bishop of Jerusalem. We shall therefore, in this Chapter proceed to relate the particulars concerning their fellow-labourers in the cause of Christ; in doing which we shall begin with the Apostle

St. A N D R E W.

After the ascension of Our Blessed Lord into heaven, and the descent of the Holy Ghost on the apostles, to qualify them for the great business they were about to undertake, St. Andrew was appointed to preach the Gospel in Scythia and the neighbouring countries. Accordingly he departed from Jerusalem, and first travelled through Cappadocia, Galatia and Bythia, instructing the inhabitants in the faith of Christ, and continued his journey along the Euxine Sea, into the deserts of Scythia. On his arrival at a place called Amynsus, he was received with great civility by a distinguished Jew of that town; upon which he went into the synagogue, preached to them concerning Jesus, and, from the prophecies of the Old Testament, proved him to be the Messiah and Saviour of the world. During his stay here he converted many to the true faith, having done which, previous to his departure, he ordained them priests, and settled the times of their public meetings for the performance of Divine worship.

Leaving Amynsus, he proceeded to Trapezium, a maritime city on the Euxine Sea; from whence, after visiting many other places, he went to Nice, where he staid two years preaching and working miracles with great success. From Nice he proceeded to Nicomedia, and from thence

to Chalcedon, where he took shipping, and sailing through the Propontis, passed the Euxine Sea to Heraclea, and afterwards to Amastris; in all which places he met with very great difficulties, but overcame them by an invincible patience and resolution.

From Amastris, Andrew went to Sinope, a city situated on the Euxine Sea, and famous both for the birth and burial of king Mithridates. The inhabitants of this city were chiefly Jews who, partly from a zeal for their religion, and partly from their barbarous manners were exasperated against Andrew, entered into a confederacy to burn the house in which he lodged. But being disappointed in their design, they treated him with the most savage cruelty, throwing him on the ground, stamping upon him with their feet, pulling and dragging him from place to place; some beating him with clubs, and others pelting him with stones, till at length, apprehending they had entirely deprived him of life, they cast him out into the fields. But he miraculously recovered, and returned publicly into the city; by which, and other miracles he wrought among them, he converted many from the errors of their ways, and induced them to become disciples of the Blessed Jesus.

Departing from Sinope, he returned to Jerusalem, and, after staying a short time in his own country, went again into the province allotted for the service of his ministry, which greatly flourished through the power of the Divine grace that attended it. He travelled over Thrace, Macedonia, Thessaly, Achaia, and Epirus*, preaching the Gospel, propagating Christianity, and confirming the doctrine he taught with signs and miracles. At length he arrived at Patrea†, a city of Achaia, where he gave his last and greatest testimony to the Gospel of his Divine Master, by cheerfully sealing it with his blood.

It happened that Ægenas, the pro-consul of Achaia, came at this time to Patrea, where, knowing

* Epirus was a province of Greece, lying along the coast of the Ionian Sea, and having for its bounds Albania on the north, Thessaly on the south, Achaia on the south-east, and the ocean on the west.

† Patrea was situated on an hill near the sea, about ten miles from the mouth of the gulph Lepanto. The goddess Di-

ana was worshipped here in the most diabolical manner, having a most beautiful young man and maid, every year, sacrificed to her, till, by the preaching of St. Andrew, one Eurypilus, a great man of the place, being converted to Christianity, occasioned that barbarous custom to be totally laid aside.

ing that many of the people had abandoned the heathen religion and embraced the gospel of Christ, he had recourse to every method both of favour and cruelty, to reduce the people to their old idolatry. The apostle, whom no difficulties or dangers could deter from performing the duties of his ministry, addressed himself to the pro-consul, calmly putting him in mind that, being only a judge of men, he ought to reverence him who was the supreme and impartial judge of all, pay him the divine honours due to his exalted majesty, and abandon the impieties of his idolatrous worship; observing to him, that if he would renounce his idolatries, and heartily embrace the Christian faith, he might, with him and the members who had believed in the Son of God, receive eternal happiness in the Messiah's kingdom.

The pro-consul told St. Andrew he would never embrace the religion he had mentioned, and that if he did not sacrifice to the gods (in order that all those whom he had seduced might, by his example, be brought back to the ancient religion they had forsaken) he would cause him to be immediately put to death. The apostle replied, that he saw it was in vain to endeavour to persuade a person incapable of sober counsels, and hardened in his own blindness and folly, to forsake his evil ways; and that, with respect to himself, he might act as he pleased, and if he had any torment greater than another, he might inflict it upon him; as the stricter constancy he shewed in his sufferings for Christ, the more acceptable he should be to his Lord and Master, after his departure from this wicked world.

This so irritated Aëneas, that he immediately condemned him to death. Accordingly, after being scourged, in the most unmerciful manner, by seven lictors, he was led away to be crucified. As soon as he approached the cross he knelt down, and saluted it in words to this effect: "I have long desired and expected this happy hour. The cross has been consecrated by the body of Christ hanging on it, and adorned with his members as with so many inestimable jewels. I therefore come joyfully and triumphantly to it, that it may receive me as a disciple and follower of Him, who once hung upon it, and be the means of carrying me safe to my Master, being the instrument on which he redeemed me."

After offering up his prayers to the throne of grace, and exhorting the people to constancy and perseverance in the faith he had delivered to them, he was fastened to the cross, on which he hung two whole days teaching and instructing the people. In the mean time great interest was made with the pro-consul to save his life; but the apostle earnestly begged of God, that he might then depart, and seal the truth of his religion with his blood. His prayers were heard, and he soon after expired on the last day of November, but in what year is not certain.

The cross on which he was fixed was made of two pieces of timber, crossing each other in the middle, in the shape of the letter X, (which has ever since been known by the name of *St. Andrew's Cross*) and to this he was fastened, not with nails, but cords, to make his death more painful and lingering.

His body being taken down from the cross, was decently and honorably interred by Maximilla, a lady of great quality and estate, and whom Nicephorus tells us was wife to the pro-consul. Constantine the Great afterwards removed his body to Constantinople, and buried it in the great church he had built to the honour of the apostles. This structure being taken down some hundred years after by the emperor Justinian, in order to be re-built, the body of St. Andrew was found in a wooden coffin, and again deposited in the same place it had been before, which was afterwards revered by all true professors of the Christian religion.

St. J A M E S the GREAT.

This apostle was surnamed the Great, to distinguish him from that James (another of the apostles) who was bishop of Jerusalem. After the ascension of the Blessed Jesus he preached to the dispersed Jews; that is, to those converts who were dispersed after the death of Stephen. He first preached the Gospel in several parts of Judea and Samaria, after which he visited Spain, where he planted Christianity, and appointed some select disciples to perfect what he had begun.

After this he returned to Judea, where he continued preaching, in different parts, for some time, with great success; till at length Herod (who was a bigot to the Jewish religion, and desirous of acquiring the favour of the Jews) began a violent persecution against the Christians, and to such a degree did his zeal animate him, that, after a short trial, he ordered James to be put to death.

As he was led to the place of execution, the officer that guarded him to the tribunal, or rather his accuser, having been converted by that remarkable courage and constancy shewn by the apostle at the time of his trial, repented of what he had done, came and fell down at the apostle's feet, and heartily begged pardon for what he had said against him. The holy man, after recovering from the surprize, tenderly embraced him. *Peace*, said he, *my son, peace be to thee and the pardon of thy faults*. Upon which the officer publicly declared himself a christian, and both were beheaded at the same time.

Thus fell the great apostle St. James, taking cheerfully that cup of which he had long before told his Lord and Master he was both ready and willing to drink.

St. J O H N the EVANGELIST.

Though this apostle was by much the youngest of the whole, yet he was admitted into as great a share of his Master's confidence as any. He was one of those to whom our Lord communicated the most private passages of his life; one of those whom he took with him when he raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead; one of those to whom he gave a specimen of his divinity in his transfiguration on the mount; one of those who

who were present at his conference with Moses and Elijah, and heard that voice which declared him *the beloved Son of God*; and one of those who were companions in his solitude, most retired devotions, and bitter agonies in the garden.

These instances of particular favour our apostle endeavoured, in some measure, to answer, by returns of particular kindness and constancy; for though he at first deserted his Master on his apprehension, yet he soon discovered the impropriety of his conduct; he therefore went back to seek his Saviour, confidently entered the high-priest's hall, followed Our Lord through the several particulars of his trial, and at last waited on him at his execution, owning Him, as well as being owned by Him, in the midst of armed soldiers, and in the thickest crowds of his inveterate enemies. Here it was that Our Great Redeemer committed to his care his sorrowful and disconsolate mother with his dying breath. And certainly Our Blessed Lord could not have given a more honourable testimony of his particular kindness and respect to John, than by leaving his own mother to his trust and care; and substituting him to supply that duty he himself paid her while he resided in this vale of sorrow.

When the apostles made a division of the provinces among them after Our Saviour's ascension into heaven, in order to circulate the doctrine of their Lord and Master, that of Asia fell to the share of St. John, though he did not immediately enter upon his charge, but continued at Jerusalem till the death of the Blessed Virgin, which happened about fifteen years after Our Lord's ascension.

After being thus released from the trust committed to his care by his dying Master, he went into Asia, and industriously applied himself to the propagation of Christianity, preaching where the Gospel had not then been known, and confirming it where it was already planted. Many churches

of note and eminence were founded by him, particularly those of Smyrna*, Philadelphia, Laodicea, and others; but his chief place of residence was at Ephesus, where St. Paul had founded a church, and constituted Timothy bishop.

After John had spent several years at Ephesus, an accusation was laid against him before the emperor Domitian (who had then began a persecution against the Christians) as being an assertor of false doctrine and impiety, and a public subverter of the religion of the empire. In consequence of this, and in conformity to the orders of Domitian, the pro-consul of Ephesus sent him bound to Rome, where he met with that treatment, which might have been expected from so barbarous a prince, being thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil. But the Almighty, who reserved him for farther service in the vineyard of his son, restrained the heat, as he did in the fiery furnace of old, and delivered him from this seemingly unavoidable destruction. And surely one would have thought that so miraculous a deliverance might have been sufficient to have persuaded any rational man, that the religion he taught was from God, and that he was protected from danger by the hand of Omnipotence. But miracles themselves were not sufficient to convince this cruel emperor, or abate his fury. He ordered St. John to be transported to a disconsolate island in the Archipelago, called Patmos, where he continued several years instructing the poor inhabitants in the knowledge of the Christian faith; and here, about the end of Domitian's reign, he wrote his book of Revelations, exhibiting by visions, and prophetic representations, the state and condition of Christianity that would take place in the future periods and ages of the church.

On the death of Domitian, and the succession of Narva (who repealed all the odious acts of his predecessors, and by public edicts recalled those whom the fury of Domitian had banished) St. John returned to Asia, and again fixed his residence

* Some of the fathers of the church relate the following very singular circumstance, in which St. John was materially concerned: Being in the Christian church at Smyrna, he beheld a comely young man among the congregation. As he was particularly struck with his appearance, he fervently recommended him to the bishop of Smyrna, in the name of Christ. St. John went to Ephesus, and the bishop taking home the young man, instructed him in every Christian duty, and made him a pastor. The youth, however, falling into bad company, grew debauched, associated with thieves, and became the captain of a band of robbers. When St. John came again to Smyrna, he enquired after the young man; and was told by the bishop that he was dead.—“Dead,” (said he) “of what disease did he die?” To which the bishop replied, with tears, “He is dead to God, has turned not only libertine but a thief, and has committed many robberies and murders in the neighbouring mountains, where he commands a most desperate gang.” The apostle was greatly afflicted at this intelligence, but immediately ordered a horse and a guide to conduct him to the mountain. Arriving at a very desolate part, he was suddenly surrounded by a detachment of the robbers, who were roaming after prey. “This is the very thing I wanted,” said St. John, very calmly, “shew me the way to your captain; ’tis with him I have business.” And by his venerable appearance, for the saint was now upwards of ninety years of age, they immediately complied, and treated him with a peculiar degree of reverence, for which they could not account. When the captain of the robbers first saw him, he darted a fierce look

at him, but in a few minutes recollecting the holy apostle, he changed colour, was filled with confusion, and so overwhelmed with shame, that he hastily fled. The aged apostle followed as quick as possible, and called to him in these soothing words: “Stay, my son, why do you fly from your father, who loves you? Let not an armed man fly from one that is unarmed, a young man from an old man.—Have pity upon me, son;—fear not, there is yet hope of salvation; I will answer for thee to Christ, I will die for thee, as Christ died for us all; I will, if occasion requires, give my life for thee.—Believe me, it is Christ himself that hath sent me.” On hearing these words, the astonished robber stopped—dropped his weapons, stood mute for some time, and at length bursting into tears, he ran and embraced the apostle, but at the same time covered his right hand which had committed murder, that it should not touch the holy man. St. John, however, told him, that if he sincerely repented, Christ would pardon him, pointed out several texts of scripture to confirm what he said, prayed for him heartily, and even kissed his murdering hand, which he assured him would be forgiven on his real repentance. The robber now became a second time a convert, but with better success than at first, for he continued steadfast in his faith, and in the practice of every virtue till his death. Another advantage accrued from his second conversion; his companions, and associates in wickedness, struck by his example, and persuaded by his discourses, reformed their lives, embraced the Christian faith, and became useful members of society.

dence at Ephesus, on account of Timothy their bishop having some time before been put to death by the people of that city. Here, with the assistance of seven other bishops, he took upon himself the government of the large diocese of Asia Minor, and disposed of the clergy in the best manner he could, spending his time in an indefatigable execution of his charge, travelling from one part to another, and instructing the people in the principles of that holy religion he was sent to propagate.

In this manner did John continue to spend his time till death put a period to his labours, which happened in the beginning of the reign of the emperor Trajan. His remains were deposited in the city of Ephesus, where several of the fathers observe, that his tomb, in their time, was remaining in a church, which was built to his honour, and called by his name. He was the only apostle who escaped a violent death; notwithstanding which he is deemed a martyr, on account of his having undergone the mode of an execution, though it did not take effect. He lived the longest of any of the apostles, being near an hundred years of age at the time of his death; and the church commemorates the 27th day of December to his memory.

St. John, having been brought up to the business of a fisherman, never received a liberal education; but what was wanting from human art was abundantly supplied by the excellent constitution of his mind, and that fullness of Divine grace with which he was adorned. His humility was admirable, always studiously concealing whatever tended to his own honour. In his epistles he never styles himself either Apostle or Evangelist: the title of *presbyter*, or *elder*, is all he assumes, and probably as much in regard to his age as his office. In his Gospel, when he speaks of *the disciple whom Jesus loved*, he conceals his own name, leaving the reader to discover who he meant. He practised charity to the utmost extent, and affectionately recommended it to all mankind. This (and the love of our neighbour) is the great vein that runs through all his writings, more especially his Epistles, wherein he urges it as the great and peculiar law of Christianity, and without which all pretensions to Our Blessed Saviour are vain and frivolous; useless and insignificant. When age and the infirmities of nature had rendered him so weak, that he was unable to preach to the people any longer, he was led, at every public meeting, to the church at Ephesus, where he generally addressed himself to the people in these words: *Little children, love one another*. When his hearers, tired with the constant repetition of the same thing, asked him the reason of it, he told them, that to love one another was the command of Our Blessed Saviour.

The greatest instance of our apostle's care for the souls of men is displayed in the inimitable writings he left to posterity. The first of which in point of time, though placed last, in the sacred canon, is his Apocalypse, or book of Revelations, which he wrote during his banishment in the island of Patmos.

Next to the Apocalypse, in order of time, are

his three epistles, the first of which is catholic, calculated for all times and places, containing the most excellent rules for the conduct of a Christian life; pressing to holiness and purity of manners, and not to be satisfied with a naked and empty profession of religion, not to be led away with the crafty insinuation of seducers, and cautioning men against the poisonous principles and practices of the Gnostics. The apostle here, according to his usual modesty, conceals his name, it being of more consequence to a wise man what is *said*, than he who *says it*. It appears from St. Augustine, that this Epistle was antiently inscribed to the Parthians, because, in all probability, St. John preached the Gospel in Parthia. The other two Epistles are but short, and directed to particular persons: the one to a woman of honourable quality, encouraging her and her children to charity, to perseverance in good works, and to shew no countenance to false teachers and deceivers. The other Epistle is directed to the charitable and hospitable Gaius, the kindest friend, and the most courteous entertainer of all indigent Christians.

Before he undertook the task of writing his Gospel, he caused a general fast to be kept in all the churches throughout Asia, to implore the blessing of heaven on so great and momentous an undertaking. When this was done he set about the work, and completed it in so excellent and sublime a manner, that the antients generally compared him to an eagle soaring aloft among the clouds, whither the meek eye of man was not able to follow him.

St. Paul, in speaking of the writings of this apostle, says, "Among all the evangelical writers, none are like St. John for the sublimity of his speech, and the height of his discourses, which are beyond any man's capacity fully to reach and comprehend." This is corroborated by Epiphanius, who says, "St. John, by a loftiness and speech peculiar to himself, acquaints us, as it were out of the clouds and dark recesses of wisdom, with the Divine doctrine of the Son of God."

Such is the character given of the writings of this great apostle and evangelist, who was honoured with the endearing title of being the beloved disciple of the Son of God; a writer so profound as to deserve, by way of eminence, the character of *St. John the Divine*.

St. P H I L I P.

In the distribution made by the apostles of the several regions of the world in which they were to preach the Gospel after Our Lord's ascension, the Upper Asia fell to Philip, where he laboured with the most indefatigable diligence to propagate the doctrine of his Master in those parts. From the constancy and power of his preaching, and the efficacy of his miracles, he gained numerous converts, whom he baptized in the Christian faith, curing at once their bodies of infirmities and distempers, and their souls of errors and idolatry. Here he continued a considerable time, and, before he left the place, settled the churches,

and

and appointed guides and ministers over those whom he had converted.

After Philip had, for several years, successfully exercised his apostolic office in Upper Asia, he went to Hierapolis in Phrygia, a city remarkably rich and populous, but at the same time over-run with the most enormous idolatry. Philip was greatly grieved to see the people so wretchedly enslaved by error and superstition: he therefore repeatedly offered up his prayers to heaven in their behalf, till, by his prayers, and often calling on the name of Christ, he procured the death, or at least the vanishing, of a dragon, or enormous serpent, to which they paid adoration.

Having thus demolished their deity, Philip clearly demonstrated to them how ridiculous and unjust it was to pay divine honour to such odious creatures: he told them that God alone was to be worshipped as the great parent of all the world, who, in the beginning, made men after his glorious image, and when fallen from that innocent and happy state, sent his own Son into the world to redeem them. That, in order to perform this glorious work, he died on the cross, and rose again from the dead, and at the end of the world would come again to raise all the sons of men from the chambers of the dust, and either sentence them to everlasting punishment, or reward them with everlasting felicity.

This discourse roused them from their lethargy; inasmuch that great numbers, being ashamed of their idolatry, immediately forsook it, and embraced the doctrine of the Gospel. But the success attending Philip's endeavours proved fatal to him. The magistrates were so incensed at his having obtained such a number of converts that they resolved to put an effectual stop to his proceedings. They accordingly ordered him to be seized, and thrown into prison, from whence, after being severely scourged, he was led to execution, and put to death in the manner of which, according to some, was, by being hanged against a pillar, and, according to others, by crucifixion.

As soon as he was dead, his body was taken down by Bartholomew, his fellow-labourer in the Gospel, and Mariamne his sister, the constant companion of his travels, and decently interred in a private place near the city; both of whom, for performing this friendly office, nearly escaped with their lives.

The martyrdom of St. Philip happened about eight years after that of St. James the Great; and his name, together with that of St. James the Less, is commemorated on the first of May.

St. B A R T H O L O M E W.

This apostle is mentioned among the immediate disciples of Our Lord under the appellation of Bartholomew, though it is evident, from divers passages in scripture, that he was also called Nathaniel*.

After Our Lord's ascension into heaven, Bartholomew visited different parts of the world, in order to propagate the Gospel of his Master, and at length penetrated as far as the Higher India. Here he remained a considerable time, and then went to Hierapolis in Phrygia, where he laboured (in conjunction with Philip) to plant christianity in those parts; and to convince the blind idolaters of the evil of their ways, and direct them in the paths which lead to eternal salvation. This enraging the bigotted magistrates, they sentenced Bartholomew to death, and he was accordingly fastened to a cross; but their consciences flaring them in their faces for the iniquity they were about to commit, they ordered him to be taken down, and set at liberty.

In consequence of this our apostle left Hierapolis, and went to Lycaonia, where he obtained a great number of converts, whom he instructed and trained up in the principles of the Christian religion. From Lycaonia he went to Albania, a city on the Caspian Sea, a place miserably over-run with idolatry, from which he laboured hard to reclaim the people. But his endeavours to *turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God*, instead of proving effectual, only procured his destruction. The magistrates were so incensed against him, that they prevailed on the governor to order him to be put to death, which was accordingly done with the most distinguished cruelty. It is the general opinion of most writers, that he was first severely beaten with sticks, then crucified, afterwards flayed while still alive, and, lastly, that his head was severed from his body. The anniversary of his martyrdom is kept on the 24th of August, the day on which he cheerfully resigned himself in defence of the doctrine of his great Lord and Master.

St. M A T T H E W.

During the first eight years after Our Blessed Lord's ascension into heaven, Matthew continued to

* That Nathaniel and Bartholomew were only two names for one and the same person, the one his proper, and the other his relative name, is beyond all doubt; but then the question is, upon what account it was, that he had his relative name conferred on him. That several sects in the Jewish church, denominated themselves from some famous person of that nation (as the Essenes did from Enoch, and the Sadducees from Sadoc) cannot be denied; and therefore, if we may suppose, that there were others, who called themselves Tholmæans, from Tholmai, scholar to Heber, the antient master of the Hebrews, who flourished in Debir and Hebron, it will be no hard matter to make Nathaniel of this order and institution, and thereupon to give him the

name of Bartholomew, i. e. a scholar of the Tholmæans, and so create him (as he is said to have been) a doctor of the Jewish law. But an easier explanation of this matter will appear from the following observations. That, as the first syllable of his name signifies a Son, the word Bartholomew will import no more, than the Son of Tholomew, or Tholmai, which was no uncommon name among the Jews. And, that it was an usual thing among them, for the son thus to derive his name, is evident from the instance of Bar-timæus, which is interpreted the Son of Timæus, Mark x. 46. and that of Bar-jona, Matth. xvi. 17. which St. John makes the same with Simon, son of Jonas, John xxi. 15.

to preach the Gospel with great assiduity in different parts of Judea; after which he left the country of Palestine in order to convert the Gentile world. But before his departure, at the earnest solicitation of the Jewish converts in Judea, he wrote the History of the life and actions of the Blessed Jesus; which he left among them as a standing monument of what he had so often delivered to them in his sermons.

After Matthew left Judea, he travelled into various parts, but the particular places he visited are not certainly known. However, after labouring indefatigably in the vineyard of his Master, he suffered martyrdom at a city called Nadabar in Ethiopia; but the particular manner of his death is not certainly known, though it is the general conceived opinion that he was slain with an halbert. His martyrdom is commemorated by the church on the 21st day of September.

St. Matthew was a remarkable instance of the power of religion, in bringing men to a proper temper of mind. If we reflect upon his circumstances while he continued a stranger to the great Redeemer of mankind, we shall find that the love of the world had possessed his heart. But notwithstanding this, no sooner did Christ call him, than he abandoned, without the least scruple or hesitation, all his riches; nay, he not only renounced his lucrative trade, but ran the greatest hazards of displeasing the masters who employed him, for quitting their service without giving them the least notice, and leaving his accounts in confusion. Had Our Blessed Saviour appeared as a secular prince, clothed with temporal power and authority, it would have been no wonder for him to have gone over to his service: but when he appeared under all the circumstances of poverty, when he seemed to promise his followers nothing but misery and sufferings, in this life, and to propose no other rewards than the invisible encouragements of another world, his change appears truly wonderful and surprizing—but Divine grace can subdue all opposition.

His contempt of the world was fully manifested in his exemplary temperance and abstemiousness from all delights and pleasures; insomuch, that he even refused the ordinary conveniencies and accommodations of life. He was remarkably modest in the opinion he entertained of himself, always giving the preference to others, even though their abilities were not so conspicuous as his own. The rest of the evangelists are careful to mention the honour of his apostleship, but speak of his former sordid, dishonest, and disgraceful course of life, only under the name of Levi; while he himself sets it down with all its circumstances, under his own proper and common name. A conduct which at once commends the prudence and candour of the apostle, and suggests to us this useful reflection, That the greatest sinners are not excluded from Divine grace; nor can any, if penitent, have just reason to despair, when publicans and sinners find mercy at the throne of grace.

The Gospel which St. Matthew wrote at the intreaty of the Jewish converts, before he left Judea, was penned in the Hebrew language, but soon after translated into Greek by one of his

disciples. After the Greek translation was admitted, the Hebrew copy was chiefly owned and used by the Nazaræi, a middle sect between Jews and Christians; with the former they adhered to the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic law, and with the latter they believed in Christ, and embraced his religion; and hence this Gospel has been styled *The Gospel according to the Hebrews*, and *The Gospel of the Nazarenes*.

ST. THOMAS.

The apostle Thomas, after Our Lord's ascension, continued to preach the Gospel in various parts of Judea; till at length, being interrupted by the dispersion of the Christian church in Jerusalem, he repaired into Parthia, the province assigned him for his ministry. He afterwards preached the Gospel to the Medes, Persians, Carmans, Hyrcani, Bractarians, and the neighbouring nations. During his preaching in Persia, he is said to have met with the magi, or wise men, who had taken that long journey at Our Saviour's birth to worship him, whom he baptized, and took with him, as his companions and assistants in propagating the Gospel.

Leaving Persia he travelled into Ethiopia, preaching the glad tidings of the Gospel, healing the sick, and working other miracles, to prove he had his commission from on high.

After travelling through these countries, he entered India, and went first to Socotora, an island in the Arabian sea, and then to Cranganor, from whence, having converted many from the error of their ways, he travelled further into the east. Having successfully preached the Gospel here, he returned back to the kingdom of Coromandel, where at Malipur, the metropolis of the kingdom, not far from the mouth of the Ganges, he began to erect a place for Divine worship, but was interrupted by the idolatrous priests, and Sagamo prince of the country. However, after he had performed several miracles, he was suffered to proceed in the work, and Sagamo himself embraced the Christian faith, whose example was soon followed by great numbers of his friends and subjects.

This remarkable success alarmed the Brachmans, who plainly perceived that their religion would be soon extirpated unless some method could be found of putting a stop to the progress of Christianity: they therefore resolved to put the apostle to death. At a small distance from the city was a tomb, whither St. Thomas often retired for private devotion: hither the Brachmans and their armed followers pursued him, and while he was at prayer, they first threw at him a shower of darts, after which one of the priests ran him through the body with a lance. His corpse was taken up by his disciples, and buried in the church he had caused to be erected, and which was afterwards improved into a fabric of very great magnificence. His martyrdom is commemorated on the 21st of December.

St. Chrysostom says, that St. Thomas, who at first was the weakest and most incredulous of all the

the apostles, became, through Christ's condescension to satisfy his scruples, and the power of the Divine grace, the most active and invincible of them all; travelling over most parts of the world; and living without fear in the midst of barbarous nations, through the efficacy of that Almighty power, which can make the weakest vessels to perform acts of the greatest difficulty and moment.

St. SIMON, commonly called the ZEALOT.

This apostle, in the catalogue of Our Lord's chosen disciples, is stiled *Simon the Canaanite*, from whence some are of opinion that he was born at Cana in Galilee; and it is generally thought that he was the bridegroom mentioned by St. John, at whose marriage Our Blessed Saviour turned the water into wine.

The name of this apostle is derived from the Hebrew word *knab*, which signifies *zeal*, and denotes a warm and sprightly disposition. He did not, however, acquire this name from his ardent affection to his Master, and the desire of advancing his religion in the world, but from his zealous attachment to a particular sect of religion before he became acquainted with his great Lord and Master.

In order to explain this matter more clearly to the understanding of our readers, it is necessary to observe, that as there were several sects and parties among the Jews, so there was one, either a distinct sect, or at least a branch of the Pharisees, called the Sect of the Zealots. This sect took upon them to inflict punishments in extraordinary cases; and that not only by the connivance, but with the leave both of the rulers and people, till, in process of time, their zeal degenerated into all kinds of licentiousness and wild extravagance; and they not only became the pests of the commonwealth in their own territories, but were likewise hated by the people of those parts which belonged to the Romans. They were continually urging the people to shake off the Roman yoke and assert their natural liberty, taking care, when they had thrown all things into confusion, to make their own advantage of the consequences arriving therefrom. Josephus gives a very long and particular account of them, throughout the whole of which he repeatedly represents them as the great plague of the Jewish nation. Various attempts were made, especially by Ananas the high-priest, to reduce them to order, and oblige them to observe the rules of sobriety; but all endeavours proved ineffectual. They continued their violent proceedings, and, joining with the Idumeans, committed every kind of outrage. They broke into the sanctuary, slew the priests themselves before the altar, and filled the streets of Jerusalem with tumults, rapine and blood. Nay, when Jerusalem was closely besieged by the Roman army, they continued their detestable proceedings, creating fresh tumults and factions, and were indeed the principal cause of the ill success of the Jews in that fatal war.

This is a true account of the sect of the zea-

lots; though whatever St. Simon was before, we have no reason to suspect but that after his conversion he was very zealous for the honour of his Master, and considered all those who were enemies to Christ as enemies to himself, however near they might be to him in any natural relation. As he was very exact in all the practical duties of the Christian religion, so he shewed a very serious and pious indignation towards those who professed religion, and a faith in Christ with their mouths, but dishonoured their sacred profession by their irregular and vicious lives, as many of the first professing Christians really did.

St. Simon continued in communion with the rest of the apostles and disciples at Jerusalem; and at the feast of Pentecost received the same miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost; so that he was qualified with the rest of his brethren for the apostolic office. In propagating the Gospel of the Son of God, we cannot doubt of his exercising his gifts with the same zeal and fidelity, as his fellow apostles, though in what part of the world is uncertain: some say he went into Egypt, Cyrene, and Africa, preaching the Gospel to the inhabitants of those remote and barbarous countries: and others add, that after he had passed through those burning wastes, he preached the Gospel to the inhabitants of the western parts, and even in Britain: where, having converted great multitudes, and sustained the greatest hardships and persecutions, he was at last crucified, and buried in some part of that island; but the exact place where is unknown. The church, joining him with St. Jude, commemorate his memory on the 28th of October.

St. J U D E.

It is very observable of this apostle, that the Evangelists commonly call him, not Jude, but either Thaddæus, or Labbæus; the reason of which, in all human probability, is, from the particular dislike they had to the name which was so nearly similar to that of the base and perfidious Judas Iscariot, who treacherously sold and betrayed his Master.

Jude was brother to James the Less, afterwards bishop of Jerusalem, being the son of Joseph by a former wife. It is not known when or by what means he became a disciple of Our Blessed Saviour, there not being any thing said of him, till we find him in the catalogue of the twelve apostles; nor afterwards till Christ's Last Supper, when discoursing with them about his departure, and comforting them with a promise, that he would return to them again, meaning after his resurrection from the dead.

The sacred records are so very short in their accounts of this apostle, that we must be beholden to other ecclesiastical writers, for information relative to his conduct after the ascension of Our Blessed Lord into heaven. Paulinus tells us, that the part which fell to his share in the apostolic division of the provinces, was Lybia, but he does not tell us whether it was the Cyrenian Lybia, which is thought to have received

the Gospel from St. Mark, on the more southern parts of Africa. But however that be, in his first setting out to preach the Gospel, he travelled up and down Judea and Galilee; then through Samaria into Idumea, and to the cities of Arabia and the neighbouring countries, and afterwards to Syria and Mesopotamia. Nicephorus adds, that he came at last to Edeffa, where Abagarus governed, and where Thaddeus, one of the seventy, had already sown the seeds of the Gospel. Here he perfected what the other had begun; and having, by his sermons and miracles, established the religion of Jesus, he died in peace; but others say that he was slain at Berites, and honourably buried there. The writers of the Latin church are unanimous in declaring, that he travelled into Persia, where, after great success in his apostolical ministry for many years, he was at last, for his free and openly reproving the superstitious rites and customs of the Magi, cruelly put to death.

St. Jude wrote only one epistle, which is placed the last of those seven, styled catholic, in the sacred canon. It has no particular inscription, as the other six have, but is thought to have been primarily intended for the Christian Jews in their several dispersions, as were the epistles of the apostle Peter. In it he informs them, "that he at first intended to have wrote to them concerning the *common salvation*, in order to confirm them in their belief; but, finding the doctrine of Christ attacked on all sides by heretics, he thought it more necessary to exhort them to stand up manfully in defence of the *faith once delivered to the saints*, and to oppose those *false teachers*, who so earnestly laboured to corrupt them; and that they might know these the better, he describes them in their proper colours, and foretels their future, if not impending danger: but, at the same time, he endeavours to exhort them, by all gentle methods, to save them, and to take them *out of the fire* into which their own folly had cast them."

It was some time before this Epistle was generally received in the church. The author, indeed, like St. James, St. John, and sometimes St. Paul, does not call himself an apostle, but only *the servant of Christ*. But he has added what is equivalent, *Jude the brother of James*, a character which can only belong to himself: and surely the humility of a follower of Christ should be no objection to his writings.

St. M A T T H I A S.

Matthias was one of the seventy disciples whom Our Blessed Lord made choice of to assist him in the discharge of his public ministry. After his death Matthias was elected into the apostleship, to supply the place of Judas, who was so struck with remorse at having betrayed his Master, as to put a period to his own existence.

After Our Lord's ascension into heaven, Matthias spent the first year of his ministry in Judea, where he was so successful as to bring over a prodigious number of people to the Christian faith. From Judea he travelled into other countries,

and, proceeding eastward, came at length to Ethiopia. Here he likewise made many converts, but the inhabitants in general being of a fierce and untractable temper, resolved to take away his life, which they effected by first stoning him, and then severing his head from his body. The anniversary of his martyrdom is kept in the Christian church on the 24th of February.

St. M A R K.

In the dispersion of the apostles for propagating the Gospel in different parts of the world, after Our Lord's ascension into heaven, St. Mark was, by Peter, sent into Egypt, where he soon planted a church in Alexandria, the metropolis; and such was his success, that he converted prodigious multitudes of people, both men and women, to the Christian religion.

St. Mark did not confine himself to Alexandria, and the oriental parts of Egypt, but removed westward to Lybia, passing through the countries of Marmarcia, Pentapolis, and others adjacent, where, though the people were both barbarous in their manners, and idolatrous in their worship, yet by his preaching and miracles he prevailed on them to embrace the tenets of the gospel; nor did he leave them till he had confirmed them in the faith.

After this long tour he returned to Alexandria, where he preached with the greatest freedom, ordered and disposed of the affairs of the church, and wisely provided for a succession, by constituting governors and pastors of it. But the restless enemy of the souls of men would not suffer our apostle to continue in peace and quietness, for while he was assiduously labouring in the vineyard of his Master, the idolatrous inhabitants, about the time of Easter, when they were celebrating the solemnities of Serapis, tumultuously seized him; and, binding his feet with cords, dragged him through the streets, and over the most craggy places, to the Bucelus, a precipice near the sea, leaving him there in a lonesome prison, for that night; but his great and beloved Master appeared to him in a vision, comforting and encouraging him, under the ruins of his shattered body.

Early the next morning the tragedy began afresh; and they dragged him about in the same cruel and barbarous manner, till he expired. But their malice did not end with his death; for they burnt his mangled body after they had so inhumanly deprived it of life: but the Christians gathered up his bones and ashes, and decently interred them near the place where he used to preach. His remains were afterwards, with great pomp, removed from Alexandria to Venice, where they were religiously honoured, and he was adopted the titular saint and patron of that state.

He suffered martyrdom on the 25th of April, but the year is not absolutely known: the most probable opinion is, that it happened about the end of the reign of Nero.

His Gospel, the only writing he left behind him, was written at the intreaty and earnest desire of the converts at Rome, who, not content with having heard St. Peter preach, pressed St. Mark,

Mark, his disciple, to commit to writing an historical account of what he had delivered to them, which he performed with equal faithfulness and brevity, and being perused and approved by St. Peter, it was commanded to be publicly read in their assemblies. It was frequently stiled St. Peter's gospel, not because he dictated it to St. Mark, but because the latter composed it from the accounts St. Peter usually delivered in his discourse to the people. And this is probably the reason of what St. Chrysostom observes, that in his stile and manner of expression he delights to imitate St. Peter, representing a great deal in a few words.

St. L U K E.

The Evangelist St. Luke was a native of Antioch in Syria, and by profession a physician; and it is the general opinion of most antient historians, that he was also well acquainted with the art of painting.

After Our Lord's ascension into heaven, he spent a great part of his time with St. Paul, whom he accompanied to various places, and greatly assisted in bringing over profelytes to the Christian faith. This so endeared him to that apostle, that he seems delighted with owning him for his fellow-labourer, and in calling him *the beloved physician*, and the *brother whose praise is in the Gospel*.

St. Luke preached the Gospel with great success in a variety of places, independent of his assisting St. Paul. He travelled into different parts of Egypt and Greece, in the latter of which countries the idolatrous priests were so incensed against him that they put him to death, which they effected by hanging him on the branch of an olive tree. The anniversary of his martyrdom is held on the 18th of October.

St. Luke wrote two books for the use of the church; namely, his Gospel, and the Acts of the Apostles. Both these he dedicated to Theophilus, which many of the antients suppose to be a feigned name, denoting a lover of God, a title common to all sincere Christians. But others think it was a real person, because the title of *most excellent* is attributed to him; which was the usual form of address, in those times, to princes and other distinguished characters.

His Gospel contains the principal Transactions of the Life of our Blessed Redeemer; and in his Acts of the Apostles (which it is probable he wrote at Rome about the time of Paul's imprisonment) are recorded the most material actions of the principal apostles, especially St. Paul, whose activity in the cause of Christ made him bear a very great part in the labours of his Master; and St. Luke, being almost his constant attendant, and privy to his most intimate transactions, was consequently capable of giving a more full and satisfactory account of them than any other of the apostles.

In both these treatises his manner of writing is exact and accurate; his stile noble and elegant, sublime and lofty, and yet clear and perspicuous, flowing with an easy and natural grace and sweetness, admirably adapted to an historical de-

sign. In short, as an historian he was faithful in his relations, and elegant in his writings; as a minister, careful and diligent for the good of souls; as a Christian, devout and pious; and to crown all the rest, laid down his life in testimony of the gospel he had both preached and published to the world.

St. B A R N A B A S.

After Our Lord's ascension into heaven, Barnabas continued, for a considerable time, with St. Paul, being his constant attendant wherever he went. He travelled with him to a great variety of places in different parts of the world, and was of the most infinite service in helping him to propagate the Gospel of his great Lord and Master. At length, however, a dispute arose between them while they were at Antioch, the issue of which was, that Barnabas left Paul at Antioch, and retired to Cyprus, his native country.

After this separation from St. Paul the sacred writings give us no account of St. Barnabas; nor are the ecclesiastical writers agreed among themselves with regard to the actions of our apostle, after his sailing for Cyprus. This, however, seems to be certain, that he did not spend the whole remainder of his life in that island, but visited different parts of the world, preaching the glad tidings of the Gospel, healing the sick, and working other miracles among the Gentiles. After long and painful travels, attended with different degrees of success in different places, he returned to Cyprus, his native country, where he suffered martyrdom in the following manner: Certain Jews coming from Syria and Salamis, where Barnabas was then preaching the Gospel, being highly exasperated at his extraordinary success, fell upon him as he was disputing in the synagogue, dragged him out, and, after the most inhuman tortures, stoned him to death. His kinsman, John Mark, who was a spectator of this barbarous action, privately interred his body in a cave; where it remained till the time of the emperor Zeno, in the year of Christ 485, when it was discovered, with St. Matthew's gospel in Hebrew, written with his own hand, lying on his breast.

The anniversary of the martyrdom of St. Barnabas is kept on the 11th of June.

T I M O T H Y.

This great assertor of the cause of Christ was a disciple of St. Paul, and born at Lystra in Lycaonia. His father was a Gentile, but his mother was a Jewess. Her name was Eurice, and that of his grand mother, Lais. These particulars are taken notice of, because St. Paul commends their piety and the good education which they had given Timothy.

When St. Paul came to Derbe and Lystra, about the year of Christ 51 or 52, the brethren gave such an advantageous testimony of the merit and good disposition of Timothy, that the apostle took him with him, in order to assist him

in propagating the doctrine of his Great Lord and Master. Timothy applied himself to labour with St. Paul in the business of the Gospel, and did him very important services, through the whole course of his preaching. St. Paul calls him not only his dearly beloved son, but also his brother, the companion of his labours, and a man of God.

This holy disciple accompanied St. Paul to Macedonia, to Philippi, to Thessalonica, to Berea: and when the apostle went from Berea, he left Timothy and Silas there, to confirm the converts. When he came to Athens, he sent for Timothy to come thither to him; and when he was come, and had given him an account of the churches of Macedonia, St. Paul sent him back to Thessalonica, from whence he afterwards returned with Silas, and came to St. Paul at Corinth. There he continued with him for some time, and the apostle mentions him with Silas, at the beginning of the two epistles which he then wrote to the Thessalonians.

Some years after this, St. Paul sent Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia; and gave Timothy orders to call at Corinth, to refresh the minds of the Corinthians, with regard to the truths which he had inculcated in them. Some time after, writing to the same Corinthians, he recommends them to take care of Timothy, and send him back in peace; after which Timothy returned to St. Paul into Asia, who there stayed for him. They went together into Macedonia: and the apostle puts Timothy's name with his own, before the second Epistle to the Corinthians, which he wrote to them from Macedonia, about the middle of the year of Christ 57. And he sends his recommendations to the Romans in the letter which he wrote from Corinth the same year.

When St. Paul returned from Rome, in 64, he left Timothy at Ephesus to take care of that church of which he was the first bishop, as he is recognized by the council of Chalcedon. St. Paul wrote to him from Macedonia the first of the two letters which are addressed to him. He recommends him to be more moderate in his austerities, and to drink a little wine, because of the weakness of his stomach, and his frequent infirmities. After the apostle came to Rome in the year 65, being then very near his death, he wrote to him his second letter, which is full of marks of kindness and tenderness for this his dear disciple; and which is justly looked upon as the last will of St. Paul. He desires him to come to Rome to him before winter, and bring with him several things which he had left at Troas. If Timothy went to Rome, as it is probable he did, he must have been an eye-witness of the martyrdom of Paul, which happened in the year of Christ 66.

After Timothy had visited Paul at Rome he returned to Ephesus, where he continued to govern the church as its bishop, without the least interruption, for a considerable time, till at length he fell a victim to the malice of the Pagans, who were his most inveterate enemies. These heathens made a great feast, in the celebration of which they carried in procession the images of their idols, being all masked, and armed with clubs and other offensive weapons.

Timothy, seeing the procession, was so irritated at their idolatry and superstition, that he rushed in among them in order to stop their proceedings; upon which they immediately fell upon him, and, with their clubs, beat him in so unmerciful a manner, that he soon expired. They left the body on the spot where they had murdered him, which was removed from thence by some of his disciples, and decently interred on the top of a mountain at a small distance from the city. The Greeks commemorate his martyrdom on the 22d of January, the day on which it is generally supposed he gave up his life in defence of the doctrine he had long laboured to propagate; and during which time he had brought over great numbers of people to embrace the truth of the Christian religion.

T I T U S.

Titus was a native of Greece, and a Gentile by birth; but was converted to the Christian faith by the apostle Paul, who, in consequence of his strict adherence to the doctrine of Christ, calls him his son. St. Jerome tells us that he was St. Paul's interpreter; and that, probably, because he might write what Paul dictated, or translate into Greek what he had written in Latin.

Soon after the conversion of Titus, the apostle Paul took him with him to Jerusalem, which was at the time when he went thither about deciding the dispute then in agitation relative to the converted Gentiles being made subject to the ceremonies of the Mosaic law. On their arrival there some of the people were desirous that Titus should be circumcised; but this was not only refused by Titus, but totally objected to by Paul.

After this controversy was ended at Jerusalem, Paul sent Titus from thence to Corinth, in order to adjust some disputes which had taken place in the church of that city. Titus was received by the people with the greatest marks of respect; and, from the various discourses he preached on the occasion, was so successful as effectually to discharge the business on which he was sent.

After staying some time at Corinth, Titus went from thence into Macedonia, in order to inform Paul of the state of the church in that city. Paul was well pleased with the account he gave, and the success of his embassy; and intending himself to go to Corinth, desired Titus to return thither, to make some necessary preparations previous to his departure for that city. Titus readily undertook the journey, and immediately set off, carrying with him St. Paul's second Epistle to the Corinthians.

Titus was made bishop of the island of Crete about the 63d year after Christ, when St. Paul was obliged to quit that island, in order to take care of the other churches. The following year Paul wrote him to desire, that as soon as he should have sent Tychicus to him for supplying his place in Crete, he would come to him to Nicopolis in Epirus, where the apostle intended to pass his winter.

The subject of this Epistle is to represent to Titus what are the qualities that a bishop should be endued with. As the principal function which Titus was to exercise in the isle of Crete was to ordain priests and bishops, it was highly incumbent on him to make a discreet choice. The apostle also gives him a sketch of the advice and instructions which he was to propound to all sorts of persons: to the aged, both men and women; to young people of each sex; to slaves or servants. He exhorts him to keep a strict eye over the Cretans; and to reprove them with severity, as being a people addicted to lying, wickedness, idleness and gluttony. And as many Jews were in the churches of Crete, he exhorts Titus to oppose their vain traditions and Jewish fables; and at the same time to shew them that the observation of the law ceremonies is no longer necessary; that the distinction of meat is abolished; and that every thing is pure and clean to those that are so themselves: he puts him in mind of exhorting the faithful to be obedient to temporal power; to avoid disputes, quarrels and slander; to apply themselves to honest callings: and to shun the company of an heretic, after the first and second admonition.

Titus was deputed to preach the Gospel in Dalmatia, where he was situated when the apostle wrote his second epistle to Timothy. He afterwards returned into Crete; from which it is said, he propagated the Gospel into the neighbouring islands. He died at the age of 94, and was buried in Crete. The Greeks keep his festival on the 25th of August, and the Latins on the 4th of January.

JOHN MARK.

John Mark, cousin to St. Barnabas, and a disciple of his, was the son of a Christian woman, named Mary, who had a house in Jerusalem, where the apostles and the faithful generally used to meet. Here they were at prayers in the night, when St. Peter, who was delivered out of prison by the angel, came and knocked at the door: and in this house the celebrated church of Sion was said to have been afterwards established.

John Mark, whom some very improperly confound with the evangelist St. Mark, adhered to St. Paul and St. Barnabas, and followed them in their return to Antioch. He continued in their company and service till they came to Perga, in Pamphylia; but then seeing that they were undertaking a longer journey, he left them, and returned to Jerusalem. This happened in the year 45 of the common æra.

Some years after, that is to say in the year 51, Paul and Barnabas preparing to return into Asia, in order to visit the churches, which they had formed there, the latter was of opinion, that John should accompany them in this journey; but Paul would not consent to it: upon which occasion these two apostles separated. Paul went to Asia, and Barnabas with John Mark, to the isle of Cyprus. What John Mark did after this journey we do not know, till we find him at Rome in the year 63, performing signal services for St. Paul, during his imprisonment.

The apostle speaks advantageously of him in his epistle to the Colossians, *Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, saluteth you. If he cometh unto you, receive him.* He makes mention of him again in his epistle to Philemon, written in the year 63, at which time he was with St. Paul at Rome; but in the year 65 he was with Timothy in Asia. And St. Paul writing to Timothy, desires him to bring Marcus to Rome; adding, that he was useful to him for the ministry of the Gospel.

In the Greek and Latin churches, the festival of John Mark is kept on the 27th of September. Some say that he was bishop of Biblis, in Phœnicia. The Greeks give him the title of apostle; and say that the sick were cured by his shadow only. It is very probable that he died at Ephesus, where his tomb was very much celebrated and resorted to. He is sometimes called simply John, or Mark. The year of his death we are strangers to; and shall not collect all that is said of him in apocryphal and uncertain authors.

CLEMENT.

Clement is mentioned by St. Paul, in his epistle to the Philippians, where the apostle says that Clement's name is written in the book of life. The generality of the fathers, and other interpreters, make no question but that this is the same Clement who succeeded St. Paul, after Linus and Anaclet, in the government of the church of Rome; and this seems to be intimated, when in the office for St. Clement's day, that church appoints this part of the Epistle to the Philippians to be read.

We find several things relating to Clement's life, in the recognitions and constitutions called apostolic; but as those works are not all looked upon as authentic, though there may be truths in some of them derived from the tradition of the first ages, little stress is to be laid upon their testimony. St. Chrysostom thinks that Clement, mentioned by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Philippians, was one of the apostle's constant fellow-travellers. Irenæus, Origin, Clemens of Alexandria, and others of the antients assert, that Clement was a disciple of the apostles; that he had seen them, and heard their instructions. St. Epiphanius, Jerome, Rufinus, Bede, and some others, were of opinion, that as the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul could not be continually at Rome, by reason of the frequent journies which they were obliged to make to other places, and it was not proper that the city of Rome should be without a bishop, there was a necessity to supply the want of them by establishing Linus, Anaclet, and Clement there. The constitutions inform us, that Linus was ordained by St. Paul; Tertullian and Epiphanius say, that St. Peter ordained Clement. Rufinus tells us that this apostle chose St. Clement for his successor. But Epiphanius believes, that after he had been made bishop of Rome by St. Peter, he refused to exercise his office, till after the death of Linus and Anaclet, he was obliged to take upon him the care of the church; and this is the most generally received opinion. St. Peter's immediate successor was Linus; Linus was succeeded by

Anaclet; and Anaclet by Clement, in the year of Christ ninety-one, which was the tenth of the reign of Domitian.

During his government over the church of Rome, that of Corinth was disturbed by a spirit of division, upon which Clement wrote a long letter to the Corinthians, which is still extant, and was so much esteemed by the antients, that they read it publicly in many churches; and some have been inclined to range it among the canonical writings.

In what manner Clement conducted himself, and how he escaped the general persecution under the emperor Domitian, we have not any certain accounts; but we are very well assured that he lived to the third year of the emperor Trajan, which is the hundredth of the Christian æra. His festival is set down by Bede, and all the Latin Martyrologists, on the 23d of November; and the Greeks honour him on the 24th and 25th of the same month. Rufinus and pope Zozimus, give him the title of Martyr; and the Roman church, in its canon, places him among the saints who have sacrificed their lives in the cause of Christ.

Thus have we given the most ample account of the followers of the Blessed Jesus; the persons who spread, and caused to be spread, the light of the Gospel over the whole world, removed the veil of ignorance and superstition drawn over the kingdoms of the earth, and taught us the method of attaining eternal happiness in the courts of the New Jerusalem.

May we all follow their glorious examples! May we imitate their faith, their piety, their

character, and their love! Then shall we *pass through things temporal in such a manner, that we shall finally gain the things eternal*, and, through the merits of an all-perfect Redeemer, be admitted as worthy guests at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Behold the Glories of the Lamb!
Amidst his Father's throne:
Prepare new honours for his name,
And songs before unknown.

Let elders worship at his feet,
The church adore around,
With vials full of odours sweet,
And harps of sweeter sound.

Those are the prayers of the saints,
And these the hymns they raise:
Jesus is kind to our complaints,
He loves to hear our praise.

Now to the Lamb that once was slain
Be endless blessings paid;
Salvation, Glory, Joy remain
For ever on thy head.

Thou hast redeem'd our souls with blood,
Hast set the pris'ners free;
Hast made us kings and priests to God,
And we shall reign with thee.

The worlds of nature and of grace
Are put beneath thy power;
Then shorten these delaying days,
And bring the promis'd hour.



A P P E N D I X

T O T H E

HISTORY of the HOLY BIBLE.

Containing various Particulars necessary to illustrate and elucidate the Sacred Writings contained both in the Old and New Testament.

C H A P. I.

On the Connection of the Old and New Testament, or General Agreement of the Sacred Writers; with a summary View of the great Truth of Divine Revelation.

THE Sacred Volume, which we call the BIBLE, is not a book compiled by a single author, nor by many persons in conjunction in the same age, in which there would be no difficulty in forming a consistent composition, nor would it be any wonder to find the various parts in a just and close connection. But the Scriptures were done by several hands, in very different conditions of life, and in very distant ages, at which distinct and separate periods the world must have put on a new face, and men must have had different interests to pursue.

David wrote about 400 years after Moses, and Isaiah about 250 years after David; and Matthew more than 700 after Isaiah; and yet these authors, with all the other prophets and apostles, write in perfect harmony, confirming the authority of their predecessors, labouring to reduce the people to the observance of their instructions, and loudly exclaiming against their neglect and contempt of them, and denouncing the several judgments upon such as should continue disobedient.

This was the principal work of the prophets in a long succession: and it is well known that Our Lord came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil, that is, to vindicate and

illustrate their meaning, to complete what was imperfect, and to answer the highest ends of what was typical and figurative.

As the writers, therefore, of the Holy Scriptures are all in perfect connection and harmony together, mutually confirming the doctrine and testimony of each other, and concurring to establish the very same religious truths and principles, it is an undeniable proof that all derive their instructions from the same fountain, namely, the wisdom of God, and were, indeed, under the direction and illumination of his Spirit.

The Christian faith is, and for many years has been, embraced in all those numerous and distant lands which once composed the Roman empire, and even in countries far beyond the utmost bounds thereof. In all these spacious regions, the Christian faith, in one form or other, has been professed; and baptism and the Lord's Supper have been administered, in a succession of ages, both of which institutions were handed down to us from the mouth of Our Blessed Redeemer, by his holy apostles and evangelists.

No fact can be more evident than this: and from Our Lord and his apostles, the Gospel spread over the greatest part of the known world, which before its publication was universally involved in idolatry, established by long custom and hu-

man laws, strongly defended by all the power and learning of the world, by all the zeal of superstition, by all the blindness of profound ignorance, and by all the incorrigible perverseness of corrupt and dissolute manners; a complication of causes which would for ever bid defiance to any philosophy or wisdom of the few that can be supposed to obtain a better sense in the midst of universal darkness and depravity. But the Gospel gained a most complete and extensive victory over all these, demolished the idols of the heathen world, and every where erected the trophies of a conquering Jesus.

Now this surprizing change, which is evident to all mankind, could have been effected by no other means whatever, but by a Divine and supernatural influence. It is true indeed, that, by human power and policy, great revolutions have been brought about in all ages and parts of the world; and therefore we do not wonder at the circulation of the Mahometan or Turkish religion, as it was propagated by the sword, under a mighty warrior and politician, who by ravage, bloodshed and desolation, conquered many nations and kingdoms, laid the foundation of a potent and spacious empire; and thus by violence opened a way for the reception and extensive profession of his newly devised religion. But the religion of Jesus was triumphant, not only without the aid of human power or policy, but even in direct opposition to it. The plain fact is this.

A person, about thirty years of age, called Jesus, brought up in the most humble situation of life, without the least human interest or influence, begins to preach repentance among the Jews, the most superstitious and bigotted people in the world; declares himself the Son of God, gathers a few disciples, persons in the same humble and mean condition with himself, fishermen, publicans and such like, and sends them about preaching, what he called the Gospel, and Kingdom of God. He himself was despised by the superstitious, and greatly opposed and harrassed by men of power and learning. However, he preached for more than three years; when they caught him, and crucified him as an infamous malefactor.

This direful event, he plainly foresaw and foretold; but, not the least discouraged by the prospect, he commanded his disciples to go and preach his Gospel over all the world; promising that after his death he would assist them with power from heaven, in virtue of which they should certainly succeed. They believed him; they set out; they preached up their crucified Master, as the Lord and Saviour of all mankind; and, which is very strange, under the conduct and influence of a Master, who was dead to the world, and gone to another state! They prevailed; and in spite of the fury of the multitude, the most inveterate prejudices of the whole world, the zeal of superstition, the hatred of the Jews, the contempt of the Greeks, the power of the Romans, the pride of philosophers, and the policy of statesmen: their doctrine, like the sun, almost at once, enlightened the whole system of Pagan idolatry and religion, and advanced into the darkest and remotest corners of the earth.

Of this, we in this Christian age, are living monuments and proofs; many of us, it is to be

hoped, have received the Gospel; we own it a glorious and a shining light; we have renounced the idolatry and vain conversation of our antient predecessors; we confess and own the crucified Jesus, our King and Head, and hope for eternal life and salvation through him.

From all this it is clearly evident that Jesus was really the Son of God, that he actually rose again from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and that from thence he sent his disciples the aids and powers which he had promised, and which were so far above all that is human, that they carried their own evidence along with them, and rendered their doctrine so surprizingly successful.

As Jesus did not send his disciples to preach to all the world till after his death; and as he then did actually furnish them with all miraculous powers to render their doctrine effectual; this is the most convincing proof that the doctrine was Divine, and that he himself was actually gone to heaven, and took up his residence at the right hand of Him who sent him into the world for the redemption of lost mankind.

It is therefore certain, beyond all doubt, that Jesus Christ was sent from heaven to reveal the Gospel to the world. As we are from hence very certain, that we have in our hands the writings of the apostles, we may be sure that they contain a revelation from heaven, or that doctrine, which Christ received from God his Father, and delivered to his disciples. If so, then the writings of the Old Testament are also the word of God, because Christ and his apostles declare them to be such; therefore all scripture is given by inspiration.

The same thing may be proved by the long train of miraculous operations, which could be effected only by Divine power, and which were wrought in confirmation of the mission of prophets and apostles: as also from the spirit of prophecy, predicting future events at a great distance of time, which no human sagacity could possibly foresee, and yet were actually fulfilled in correspondence to the prediction. One instance of this is particularly evident in the present state and condition of the Jews; of whom it was foretold that, for their disobedience, they should become a dispersed people, and despised throughout the face of the earth.

Our Lord, contrary to all human probability, while he was on earth, foretold the destruction of the Jewish temple and polity, and their dispersion among all nations, which was actually accomplished in about forty years after.

In this dispersed state they have now continued above seventeen hundred years in great numbers, and in great ignominy and contempt, and yet quite distinct and separate from the people among whom they live.

This is a sufficient demonstration, that the wisdom which formed them into a peculiar people, as they have been almost ever since the deluge, is not human but Divine; for no human wisdom or power could ever form, or ever execute, so vast, so extensive a design. It must be the wisdom and power of that God alone, who is the same in every age, and who in every age has exercised a singular providence over his peculiar

culiar people; the descendants of Abraham, his servant.

Thus, the present state and being of the Jews is a very public and standing evidence of the truth of revelation, in two respects.

First, with regard to their long dispersion through most parts of the earth, and the various calamities they have suffered therein. And secondly, with respect to their being preserved as a distinct and separate body; both of which circumstances plainly shew us, that it was the will of Divine providence to preserve the Jewish nation in their dispersion, and to preserve them a distinct and separate people, in order to their future restoration.

We, and many other nations at this day, see these predictions verified in the present state of the Jews, who have been so long, and still are so miraculously preserved, separate from all other people.

Now this is a standing miracle, a wonderful work of Divine providence, and as strong a proof of revelation, as if we were to see the dead, every year, rise out of their graves, in confirmation of it; for we have still among us, after so long a time, and so many various revolutions in human affairs, the peculiar people, whom God, above three thousand years ago, separated unto himself: the very people who are the principal subject of revelation, and who are said there to be the principal objects of his providence, and we see them at this day to be so in a very surprizing manner.

Therefore in their present state we may plainly read the ancient promise made to Abraham, the head and root of the nation, the many wonderful works wrought for them from first to last, and the truth of prophetic predictions: in the present state of the Jews, we may read the truth of the Gospel, for the rejection of which, God rejected them, and scattered them over the face of the earth.

In short, we are certain there were such a people as the Jews, to whom God delivered the revelation of his will in antient time, for the descendants of these very people exist among us at this day.

We are sure the numerous predictions of Scripture, both in the Old and New Testament, relating to the Jews, are true; for we see them made good in their present state: and therefore we may be assured that the holy scriptures are given by inspiration from God; for only the spirit of God could foretell such events, and the same spirit which foretold these events, spake by the prophets and apostles, and inspired them with all that Divine wisdom and knowledge which we find in all their writings.

We might add the long apostacy and general corruption of the profession of Christianity, so plainly foretold, and under such express and particular characters, in the apostolic writings. This all the world may see has been abundantly fulfilled in the church of Rome.

Now, only the spirit of God could foresee that such a distant and deplorable state of things, which no human probability could have conjectured, would have risen out of the pure and heavenly doctrine of Christ. But the spirit which predicted this event, is the very same which was

poured out upon the apostles, and enlightened their minds with the knowledge of the Gospel; therefore the Apostles, who wrote the New Testament, had the spirit of God, and were enlightened by it.

By these arguments, we are pointing out the only fountain of life and happiness, a mine more valuable than of gold and precious stones; a plentiful magazine of heavenly and everlasting wealth, an inexhaustible fund of solid comfort and peace, the holy scriptures, the word of the everlasting God; a treasure of more immense value, which we have in our possession, if we are wise to make a right improvement of it.

But the connection and harmony of the sacred writings will receive a farther illustration, if we trace the Divine dispensations, called in the same, the *Ways* and *Works* of God.

The *ways* of God frequently signify the rules of life, which he hath given us to observe, *Pf. cxix. 3. They also do no iniquity; they walk in his ways: that is, in the law of the Lord.*

The *Works* of God may signify, the meer operations and productions of his power; but both these words have a more restricted and emphatical signification. A *way* signifies also a course of action, a custom, constitution or institution, which any person or number of persons form to themselves. *Prov. viii. 22. The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way before his works of old.* *Prov. xii. 26. The way of the wicked (their course of action) seduceth them.*

Hence *ways* and *works* signify the appointments, constitutions, or dispensations of God, by which we are to understand, the methods devised and carried on by the wisdom and goodness of God, to discover or shew himself, his nature and will, his beneficence and justice, to the minds of his reasonable creatures, for their instruction, discipline and reformation in order to promote their happiness.

These are the great ends of the Divine dispensations, as set forth to us in the sacred word, which uniformly tends to promote the same; and these are the principal points to be attended to in the explication of them.

The great God, for ever to be adored, hath actually given existence to a world of human beings such as we are. He therefore is our father, and we are his offspring, whom he hath created in love, that in a right use of the means he hath graciously afforded us, we might be qualified for honour and immortality in the heavenly world.

This seems to be the highest design the Divine goodness can form, and the highest excellency to which our nature can attain. This may be considered as the basis of all the Divine dispensations from the beginning of the world; for unless heavenly dispositions are implanted in our minds, we cannot be qualified for honour and enjoyment. It is therefore becoming the father of our spirits, and suitable to the nature of our capacities and circumstances, that proper means be provided for our instruction and discipline.

For instance. As God is not the object of any of our senses, and can be seen only by our understandings, it is proper that he should set before us, in the frame and furniture of the world, such

visible and various displays of his being, power, wisdom, justice, and kind regard, as may engage our attention, discover his eternal Godhead, and lead us to the acknowledgement, adoration, love, and dutiful obedience to our creator, father and benefactor.

These are the works, the dispensations, or constitutions of nature, whereby the Almighty, as in a glass, has discovered himself to the thoughts and eyes of his creatures here below.

But besides the constitution of universal nature, there are a variety of dispensations, which are more immediately relative to mankind; as the being born of parents to supply the several generations of the world, whence result sundry relations and duties; the being sustained by food; covered and sheltered by cloaths and habitations; healed by physicians; taught by the learned and skilful; the infirmities, appetites and passions of our constitution; the forming societies for mutual help and commerce; the institution of government, or the subordination of some to the authority of others, for preserving good order, for the protection of virtue, and punishment of vice.

Add to these, wars, pestilence, famine, earthquakes, and such like events: all these may be reckoned among the Divine appointments or dispensations, some for the exercise of our rational faculties in right action; and some for discipline, correction and reformation.

But these ways or dispensations, which in scripture are considered as the great hinges of Divine providence, on which his dealings with mankind have turned; or as the principal events, by which the great purposes and counsels of God's will have been executed, are chiefly to be attended unto; because right conceptions of these, under their circumstances and connections, will greatly contribute to the explaining of scripture Divinity, and demonstrating the harmony and agreement of sacred writ.

Let us therefore take a general survey of them.

First, the Creation of the World, as already considered.

Secondly, the Formation of Man, after the image of God.

Thirdly, Man being subjected to trial, in order to prove his obedience, yielded to temptation; sinned, and so became liable to the threatening of eternal death. But,

Fourthly, God, not willing to destroy his creature, was graciously pleased, in his infinite mercy and goodness, to introduce a new dispensation of grace in the hands of an all-glorious Mediator: at the same time subjecting the human race to a laborious life, to diseases and death temporal; and thus in great goodness, to subdue the fleshly principle, to shew the atrocious nature of sin, and by setting forth the pride, vanity, and self-sufficiency of the creature, turn his regard more steadily to the all-sufficient Creator.

But men multiplying in the earth, abused the goodness of God, and in about 1656 years Time became so wicked, that *all flesh had corrupted his way, and the earth was filled with violence.* In order to purge the world from iniquity, and to

recover it to a state of righteousness, God was pleased, by a deluge of water, to destroy that wicked generation, preserving the only family, that remained uncorrupt in the old world, in order to propagate piety and obedience in the new. At the same time, and for the same good purposes, he reduced human life into much narrower bounds.

Not long after the deluge, to prevent a second general corruption, God introduced another dispensation by confounding the language of mankind; which divided the world into several distinct societies, and consequently kept them under a stricter government, and better preserved their liberties, than if the world had been one great empire.

Thus the outrage of violence and rapine was, in a great measure, cured. But notwithstanding this, mankind fell into a different iniquity, namely, that of idolatry, whereby, within 400 years after the flood, the worship and knowledge of the only true God was in danger of being utterly lost. To prevent this, the Divine wisdom formed a new dispensation by calling Abraham from among his idolatrous kindred, and constituting his family the standard of Divine knowledge.

To them he spoke and revealed himself at sundry times, and in divers manners, and separated them from the rest of the world, by peculiar laws, and religious ceremonies, to secure them from the idolatrous practices of their neighbours. Thus they became God's peculiar people, being distinguished above all other nations, and to this day, blessed be God, we experience the happy effects of so singular a distinction, and owe to it both our Bible, and the very being of a Gospel church.

The family of Abraham, by the Divine direction, was led into Egypt; and when they had been there, under grievous oppression, 215 years, and were grown numerous enough to be a nation, God set himself at the head of them, as their King; and in a country much esteemed for learning and arts, whither men of genius and curiosity resorted from all other parts. Upon this stage, so proper, because public, God, as the King of Israel, combated the king of Egypt and his fictitious gods, and displayed his infinitely superior power both to destroy and save, by many plagues inflicted upon the land of Egypt, and by bringing out the Israelites in opposition to all the force of the king, and settling them, after they had been sufficiently disciplined in the wilderness, in the land of Canaan.

Here God set up his peculiar kingdom amongst them, and they alone of all the nations of the earth were the subjects of it, and happy in its singular privileges and blessings; but at the same time were made sensible of various providential dispensations, the general rule of which was this: while they adhered to the worship of the true God, they were always prosperous; when they declined to idolatry, they were either oppressed at home, or carried captive into other countries.

The long captivity in Babylon was not only a punishment to the Jews, but also a method of publishing

publishing the knowledge of the true God over all the Babylonish empire, as appears evidently in the Book of Daniel.

The division of the Grecian empire, which put an end to the Persian, after the death of Alexander, caused a new dispersion of the Jews, especially in Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, Cyrene, and Lybia, where their synagogues were very common. Lastly, when they were subjected to the Roman power, their God and religion became more known all over the Roman empire.

Thus the way for the kingdom of the Messiah was gradually prepared; for though the knowledge of God received from the Jews, made no public reformation of pagan idolatry, yet it greatly disposed men to receive the Gospel, when it should be preached unto them. Some became Jews, many renounced idolatry, and worshipped no other but the living and true God, who, in the Acts of the Apostles, are called *devout proselytes, Greeks, those that feared God*.

Thus have we, in a concise manner, traced things from the beginning of the world to the coming of Christ, who came in the fullness of time, for he came as soon as God, by the various methods of his providence, had prepared the world to receive him. When God had made ready a people prepared for him, then Christ came, and fully explained the nature, laws, extent, and glory of the kingdom of God, and fulfilled the great and most excellent design of Divine wisdom, by giving himself a sacrifice and propitiation for the sins of the world.

Then the great mystery of God, the calling of other nations, besides the Jews into his kingdom and church, was opened, and made manifest by the preaching of the Gospel. For this purpose, he sent out his apostles, furnished with proper powers and credentials, especially the gift of tongues, whereby they were enabled to communicate the wonderful things of God to people of different countries; and by this means, the glad tidings of salvation, and the glorious lights and privileges of the Gospel, have reached even unto the uttermost parts of the earth.

But as Christ came to restore, to explain, and, by the most glorious promises, to enforce the law of nations; and consequently as his design was to erect an universal religion, which should be recommended to all people, and which therefore was to interfere with no political establishments, but should leave them, in every country, just as it found them, teaching the nations to observe the will of God as contained in his sacred word, in the hope of eternal life: upon this grand, noble, and extensive plan, the Jewish polity would be sunk to a level with all other national governments; and the Jew on account of any prior, national advantages, would have no more claim to the blessings and privileges of the kingdom of God, than any of the Gentiles or nations, who in any of the most barbarous and despised parts of the earth should receive the faith of the Gospel: for in the Christian religion *there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ, that is, the faith and obedience, or true religion, which Christ taught, is all, and in all.* Col. iii. 11. Thus the Jew is fallen by that

very method of Divine wisdom and grace, which brought salvation to other nations. Thus the *diminishing of the Jews, is the riches of the world, and the casting away of them is the reconciling of the world.* Rom. xi. 12, 15. or the opening a door for the whole world, to come into the peculiar kingdom of God. This is the idea we ought to have of the rejection of the Jews. The grace of God was, and is still, as free to them as to other people, and the same benefits will arise to them, if they quit their long established obstinacy, and embrace the doctrine of Christ.

Soon after the publication of the Gospel, their polity and civil constitution (which otherwise would have remained in full force, and have obliged them to obey its laws, as much as the constitutions of other kingdoms of the world obliged their respective subjects) were quite overthrown by the destruction of the temple, and the expulsion of the Jews out of the land of Canaan, which they have not been able to recover, but remain dispersed over the face of the whole earth to this day. Thus the Gospel dispensation was erected, and spread and prevailed throughout the world.

Some time after the establishment of the Gospel, a grand apostacy and corruption of religion took place in the Christian church, which was predicted by the apostles, and at large foretold in the book of the Revelation.

After the apostles were removed out of the world, it pleased God to leave some of the professors of the Gospel, in matters of religion, to their own ignorance, passions and prejudices.

Thus the Christian faith by degrees was depraved, till the *man of sin* (that is the church of Rome) arose, a tyrannical, usurped power, domineering over, and imposing upon conscience, forbidding the use of understanding, and intoxicating the inhabitants of the earth with false and delusive learning, worldly pomp and splendour, and cruel persecution of the truth.

This was to be a long and severe trial of the faith and patience of the saints. In the times of this sad dispensation, it is certain, we are now living; but we hope towards the latter end of it. Through the whole course of it, God hath variously appeared, both in wrath against the corrupters and persecutors of religion; and in mercy for the comfort and support of those who have laboured under their oppression.

This persecution continued with great severity for a long course of time, till at length the morning of reformation appeared in our happy land, which for some centuries had been gradually advancing, and still continues to advance towards the perfect day; for a spirit of religious liberty, which hath been long oppressed, revives and gains strength; the scriptures are more carefully studied; ecclesiastical persecution and tyranny, under every form, more generally detested; and things seem to have a tendency towards love, unity and concord, the most perfect state of religion in this world.

This must afford satisfaction to every good man who will cheerfully join his endeavours to bring on the next glorious dispensation, which we have in prospect, when the mystery of God, with regard to the aforesaid corrupt state of religion,

ligion, shall be finished, when Babylon, in all its principles and powers, shall fall: and when the holy city, the new Jerusalem, shall be fully established.

Thus have we endeavoured to give a sketch of the works of God from the beginning of the world; and very beautiful and surprizing would the whole appear, could we see them in a full and clear light, as they are held forth to our view in the sacred writings, of the harmony and agreement of which they are, among other considerations, an undoubted evidence.

As scripture is the best explication of scripture, we shall make some general remarks, founded on the same, which will greatly assist our conceptions of, and enquiries into these very important points.

All the Divine dispensations are agreeable to the most perfect rules of righteousness and truth. Nothing false, unjust, or injurious, can be charged on the ways and works of God; for *all God's ways are judgment; a God of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is he.* Deut. xxxii. 4. *The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.* Psal. cxlv. 17.

The ways of God are not to be considered as the effects of necessity, as if the end proposed could not possibly have been gained by other means; but as the result of choice, or Divine wisdom, preferring such particular methods to any other, as best adapted to our circumstances, and as the most likely to make mankind wise and happy.

For instance, it is by the dispensation of God, that our present life is sustained by food; not because it is impossible we should live in any other way, for the Almighty could sustain us in perfect health by an act of his own immediate power. Again, our food is produced by the influence of the sun, by rain, the fertility of the ground: not because food could not be otherwise produced, for God could by an immediate act of his own power, create food for us every day, as he did for the Israelites in the wilderness: but this method of sustaining our lives is a continuance of Divine wisdom, to shew himself to our understandings, and to exercise our industry in providing a subsistence, and to be mutually helpful to each other. Hence the works of God, in scripture, are assigned to his wisdom. See Psal. civ. 24. Prov. viii. 24.

All the dispensations of God are calculated to promote obedience to his holy will; or to promote holiness of heart and life. This is the line which runs through the whole; for, however our circumstances may differ from those of our first parents, the end of our being is the same as theirs, and we, as well as they are upon trial, that we by grace may have habits of holiness confirmed in us, and be fitted for eternal life, which is the inheritance of those that are sanctified.

Though it is a melancholy reflection to consider, how the wickedness of men hath from time to time abused the patience of God, yet it must give pleasure to observe, how his goodness hath applied various remedies to prevent or heal the corruptions of mankind.

In whatever way they have gone astray from

him, his wisdom has never been at a loss to find out the most proper expedients to reclaim them. His gracious design is evidently to save a sinful world, and to carry religion both in its personal influences, and general prevalence, to the highest perfection our present condition will admit.

The scripture dispensations were severally adapted to the different capacities and improvements, as also to the moral state and circumstances of mankind. The several ages may be compared to the several stages of human life, infancy, youth, manhood and old age.

Now, as man under due culture gradually improves in knowledge and wisdom, from infancy to old age, so we may conceive of the world, as gradually improving in mental and religious attainments under several Divine dispensations: which dispensations have in every period been suitable to the improvements in knowledge, which then subsisted in the world.

Adam, when created, may be considered as a child without knowledge, learning and experience, and therefore the dispensation he was under was very different from that which we are under, who enjoy the benefit and light of so many preceding dispensations.

Thus mankind, reflecting upon preceding dispensations, will be admonished and directed to reform old errors and corruptions; and thus, even the monstrous apostacy of the church of Rome, may serve to introduce and establish the most perfect state of Christianity, that we expect will succeed the dispensation under which we live.

All God's dispensations have a practical tendency, or direct to holiness or obedience to his law; and he has always provided sufficient support for integrity and virtue. The sincere and upright, who chuse the way of truth, or turn from sin unto righteousness, the righteous and merciful God will never forsake. They make a wise improvement of his dispensations; and under all trials and afflictions, he will guide and support them; and their path shall be as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world, saith the apostle James. Then all God's works were formed and planned in his counsels, and lay under his eye in one comprehensive view, and therefore must be perfectly consistent.

One uniform method must be laid, and one even thread of design must run through the whole. They are not the result of sudden incoherent thoughts, but a well-digested plan, formed upon the justest principles by him, who seeth all his works from the beginning to the end. Whence it follows, that if we do not discern one coherent design in the Divine dispensations; or if we make any one part clash with the rest, we may be sure we do not understand them.

Goodness was the principle of creation, God made man because he delighted to communicate being and happiness, consequently goodness and fatherly love, which was the beginning and foundation of God's works, must run equally through them all, from first to last.

Previous notice was given of some of the principa

principal dispensations, either for warning, or to prepare men for the reception of them.

The deluge was preached by Noah one hundred and twenty years before it came to pass.

The Jewish dispensation was predicted to Abraham four hundred and thirty years beforehand.

Jeremiah foretold the Babylonish captivity, and Paul and John at large predicted and described the grand apostacy.

But the coming of the Messiah and the Gospel dispensation run through the whole, from the beginning to the end, in a less or greater degree of light; and it was fitting that this, which is the chief of God's works, should receive the highest testimony from prophecy; therefore it was fit it should not be introduced, till it had received that evidence, which in scripture is called the *fulness of time*. Gal. iv. 4.

The dispensations of God are intended for our study and contemplation; and it is a singular advantage to form right notions of them, because they will enlarge our conceptions of God, and influence our dispositions towards him.

If we judge truly of God's works, we shall have honourable ideas of the Divine agent. His wisdom, his goodness and truth, will stand in a fair light, and we shall confess him infinitely worthy of our highest regard. Then we shall think of God with admiration, pleasure and delight. Ps. xcii. 4. *Thou Lord hast made me glad through thy work; I will triumph in the works of thy hands.*

But if we form such conceptions of the ways of God, as represent them to be arbitrary and tyrannical, inconsistent with all our notions of justice and goodness, the effect of sovereign will, without either reason or love, he must stand before our thoughts in the most frightful colours. The most horrid gloom will be drawn over the perfections of the best of Beings, our minds will be filled with darkness and dread; and if we worship him at all, our worship and obedience will not be the free and generous duty of sons; but the joyless, constrained drudgery of slaves.

It must be remembered, that the works of God are unsearchable, and past finding out to perfection. *O Lord, how great are thy works, and thy thoughts are very deep!* Ps. xciii. 5. From a just sense of the unfathomable nature of the Divine dispensation, the apostle concludes a discourse upon the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles, with this solemn excla-

mation, *O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments! And his ways past finding out.* Rom. xi. 33.

It becomes us to admire and adore the counsels of infinite wisdom, and to acquiesce, where we cannot gain a full knowledge of them. We cannot comprehend the ways of God in their full extent, in all their largest views, and remotest connections. He therefore that is wise, will not cavil at them, nor foolishly endeavour to pry into them, beyond the bounds of revelation, and of human understanding.

Under all our present darkness, and under every dispensation, an honest heart, sincerely desirous to know the truth, will be seriously inquisitive after it, meekly submissive to what God hath revealed and commanded; willing to work together with him; and patiently persevere in well-doing. Such a temper, and such a conduct, is the best and safest guide under every dispensation, will enable us to follow God, to comply with every design of his providence, to overcome in every hour of trial, and will lead us to eternal life.

For this reason, then, it is not only our duty, but will be the most evident testimony we can give of our wisdom, frequently to read and meditate on the BIBLE, that our minds being well furnished with heavenly knowledge, and our hearts tinctured with a Divine spirit, we may be prepared for glory, honour and immortality.

How shall the young secure their hearts,
And guard their lives from sin?
Thy word, O Lord, doth rules impart,
To keep the conscience clean.

When once it enters to the mind,
It spreads such light abroad,
The meanest souls instruction find,
And raise their thoughts to God.

'Tis like the sun, an heavenly light,
That guides us all the day;
And through the dangers of the night,
A lamp to lead our way.

Thy word is everlasting truth,
How pure is ev'ry page!
Thy Holy Book shall guide our youth,
And well support our age.



C H A P. II.

On the Necessity of an extraordinary Revelation from God, as deduced from the depraved State of Human Nature.

IN the preceding chapter we have endeavoured to demonstrate the great and close connection there is between the Old and New Testament, or harmony and agreement of the sacred writers; which we have done by producing various proofs and arguments drawn from the state, circumstances, and conditions of the writers, the nature of their subjects and the Divine dispensations in general, and subjoined such remarks as may tend to instruct and improve the serious Christian in the knowledge of his holy profession. We shall, therefore, as a necessary companion to the foregoing, point out, in this chapter, the necessity of an extraordinary revelation from God, as deduced from the depraved state of human nature.

The scriptures, as contained in the Bible, are the word of God; they are the language and address of the Universal Father to his children in this world, whom he addresses in the character of Sovereign Lord of the universe, and strictly enjoins to obey his voice. The scriptures are given by inspiration of God, and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. 2 Tim. iii. 16.

Mankind, in a faithful use of their natural powers, might know God. *Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them, for the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made,* Rom. i. 19. So that even the heathens, who have no other rule than the light of nature, it might reasonably be thought could not be totally ignorant of the wise dispensations of Providence.

But how much mankind, in all ages, have abused and misapplied their understandings, is notoriously evident, and therefore it must be clear how much they stand in need of an extraordinary revelation to correct their errors, to reduce them to the obedience of God, and to secure them from relapsing into idolatry, and apostacy from him.

No book certainly can contain more evident marks of such Revelation than the Scriptures, eminently so called, of which we are happily possessed. In them we have the fullest and clearest account of the nature and perfection of God, beyond what the world at best could have attained to, and far beyond what could, in the ordinary course of things, have been, by any other means, preserved through succeeding generations.

In the scriptures, as in a durable storehouse, not to be demolished by time, we have the most noble discoveries of the nature and perfection of God, as he is our Maker, our Father, Owner,

Ruler, and daily Benefactor; as he is glorious in all his attributes, as he is infinite, and independent, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, knowledge, wisdom and power, as perfectly holy, good, righteous and true.

These glories of his Divine nature are described, not in the way of philosophical dissertations; not by a series of abstract reasoning, which are of no use to the bulk of mankind, who have but little leisure, and perhaps less inclination to attend to the curious and abstruse deductions of reason; not thus are the glories of the Divine nature delineated in scripture, but exhibited in a long, easy and intelligible series of facts and events, wherein God hath manifested his goodness, wisdom, power and justice, from the beginning of the world.

In this way the mind, with very little labour of thought, is at once convinced of the being and perfections of God, and struck with admiration, reverence, love, and those other actions, which the knowledge of God should produce in us.

In the scriptures, God appears not only in every view that the most profound philosophy can discover, but also in a practical light. We are there taught, that great as he is in himself, he is our God and Father, that he hath from his own immensity of being, given us being; that he constantly regards us, interests himself in our affairs, is concerned for our welfare; that our safety is in his favour, and that in his favour, and under his protection, we are infinitely safe and happy; that we are accountable to him for our actions; that we are continually under his eye; that he hath taken us into the nearest relation to himself, and that in order to promote our future and eternal happiness, he hath carried on various dispensations from the beginning of the world to the present time.

Thus we not only, in the easiest and clearest way, learn the perfections of scripture, but we learn them in a manner the most proper and powerful to engage and unite our hearts to God, and cause us to consider ourselves infinitely interested in his attributes and perfections.

In the scriptures we may not only with ease learn our duty in the fullest extent, but at the same time, by the numerous examples of pious men in all ages, we may see that it is practicable, and may see how to engage in it. By reading the scriptures, we may discern the reasonableness and the beauty of holiness, and also be furnished with the strongest arguments and motives to embrace it and to persevere therein. We are also assured in sacred writ of the Divine aid and assistance

assistance in our duties, trials and temptations; of the Divine consolation and encouragement in all our troubles and distresses; and if, through the Divine grace, we persevere in faith and holiness, of everlasting glory in the realms of bliss.

In this sacred treasure we have the truest and most effectual rules, whereby to form our lives; not simple propositions, not meer lectures of dull morality, but instructions intermixed with the promise of a Divine power to work mightily in us, and lead us to a Divine life and spiritual nature.

Here religion appears in all its truth, lustre, sweetness and majesty. Here it is arrayed in all its charms, not as a sour, severe, morose, gloomy principle, forbidding enjoyment, and the parent only of sorrow, horror and despair; but as our life, our glory, our peace, our joy, as giving us the truest relish and enjoyment of life, as the source of the most solid pleasure and comfort, uniting us to God, as lodging us for ever in the arms of Almighty love and goodness, as leading to and preparing us for endless joy and pleasure at his right hand.

As to sin and wickedness, philosophers have said much concerning the odious nature of vice, that it is evil, and the worst of evils, that is the disease and deformity of the mind, pernicious to the health of the body, and ruinous to the worldly interest.

Their reflections were so far just; but they could only be comprehended by men of letters and study; the common people received little or no advantage from them; but in the scriptures, the meanest minds are favoured with far better instructions than they could give.

There sin is not only set forth in all its odious colours, in all its pernicious effects, as to the present life, but its deadly nature is demonstrated as it stands in contrariety to God, as it is the transgression of his holy law, as it exposeth us to his displeasure, and is opposite to all the ends of our creation, and consequently as deserving of death.

In scripture we learn, that God will punish the impenitent workers of iniquity with everlasting destruction, and purge out of his kingdom every thing that offends. All this is so plainly and powerfully inculcated upon the mind, by many dreadful examples of the Divine vengeance upon ungodly men throughout the whole series of scripture history, by many express declarations of God's wrath, and so many exhortations of his goodness and mercy, to turn from every evil way, that no one who carefully and seriously reads the scriptures, can miss, not only of seeing the evil, the irregularity and deformity of sin, but of having his mind affected with it, and being brought into the most settled detestation of it.

With regard to pardon of sin, the wisest of philosophers seem to have had little or no notion of it. They considered it very superficially, as repugnant to the Divine perfection, and therefore say little or nothing, whether God would be propitious to sinners, or in what way he would be pleased in his wisdom to pardon transgression.

Sacrifices were frequent among them; but they seem to have understood but little of their true nature and end, nor were at all solicitous to

enquire into them. In fact they did not understand the true demerit of sin, and therefore of course must be in the dark as to the remission of it. But all these things are open and obvious to the weakest capacity in scripture.

How much the world was in the dark about a future state, without a revelation, is well known; and how clearly the world to come is opened to us in the awful prospects of eternal happiness, or endless perdition, can be concealed from none who are ever so little acquainted with the Gospel of Christ.

These things duly attended to, will shew the precious value of the holy scripture, that God's word is truth, and able to make us wise unto salvation, and further demonstrate that it is our duty to be frequently attentive in reading them.

Reading the scriptures is one of the first principles of our religion, as we are Christians; because our profession is built wholly upon the scriptures. The word of God is the guide of our actions. *It is a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our paths*, Ps. cxix. 105. Should we not then diligently study the word of God, that we may not wander from his commandments?

The word of God is the spring of all our hopes and comfort. There, and there alone, we have the rich and immense treasure of the Divine promises; and from thence alone, we can draw solid support and consolation, in a dark hour of trial and affliction.

In short, to all the valuable purposes of knowledge and life, the scriptures excel all human compositions whatever. The writings of men are but as the twinkling stars to that ocean of light, which is daily poured forth from the body of the sun. Of all the means of knowledge and wisdom in the world, none are to be compared with the word of God. We should therefore have our eyes intent upon the light, for God hath given us this invaluable treasure, the holy scriptures, that we should make them our study.

It must be carefully observed, that it is not enough to be frequently reading the scriptures, but that while we read, we should employ all our attention to understand them. The scripture may be understood, but evidently not in every degree by every man; for as there are various sorts and degrees of knowledge in scripture, some perhaps, at present, beyond the reach of any man that ever yet was in the world; and as there are men in various capacities and degrees of learning, so it is manifest, all men cannot attain to the same degree of understanding in Divine things; but there must necessarily be a great difference between the knowledge of one man and another in matters of faith and revelation.

This shews the absurdity of the popish scheme, which pretends to reduce the Christian faith in all its parts to a certain invariable standard, to which every man either with or without understanding, must conform.

This also shews, that notwithstanding it is our duty to communicate knowledge to one another, it is repugnant to the nature and design of Christianity to quarrel with one another, or to be displeased, because we have not the same degree of understanding in matters of faith; because this, according

according to the present constitution of our minds, and of the revelation God hath given us, equally understood by all, is absolutely impracticable.

But although the scriptures are not understood in every degree by every man, yet they may be understood by every man, so far as God requireth; that is, so far as he is capable of understanding them; for what a man can understand, he may understand, if he is not wanting to himself.

Further, those things in scripture, which are of the highest importance, and conducive to eternal life and salvation, are easy to be understood, and therefore how perplexed soever other things may be, about which men have differed, and which men by their difference, have more perplexed; the grand principles of faith in Christ, and obedience to the rules of the Gospel are so evident, that any ordinary capacity may, with due care and attention, easily gain a compleat knowledge of them.

The things chiefly to be understood in scripture, are Principles, or the grounds and reasons, of things and Precepts, which are the rules of duty; now if we mistake either, we shall throw all into confusion, our way will be all mist and clouds, that which should be light will be darkness, or, which is the same, a false light, to mislead us: that which should be our joy, will be heaviness; that which should be our comfort, and inspire cheerful hope, will be a dead weight to burthen our spirits and clog our course. Our path, which should be as the shining light, that shineth more and more, will be a gloomy, melancholy road, and we shall make our way with difficulty, because we want that true sense and knowledge of the ways and will of God, which is necessary to give life, comfort and vigour. Frightful images will terrify our consciences, and fill us with groundless fear. God will be described in a monstrous light, and all the ravishing glories of his truth, wisdom and love, which should powerfully draw our hearts to him, will be hid from our eyes. The lustre of redeeming grace will be eclipsed; some parts of religion will be superstitiously magnified, while others will be undervalued.

Further, if for want of due attention to the sense of scripture we mistake, or fall into error, we ought to be sensible that religious error is of a far worse nature than any other; not only as it is an error in a matter of the greatest importance, but as it is of all others the most difficult to be corrected. Hence those grosser instances of persecution and bloodshed, which have indelibly stained the Christian name. Hence those wranglings, debates, heats and animosities, which have destroyed Christian societies. These things are the fruits of men's taking their religious principles upon trust, and not founding them on the scriptures studied and understood by themselves. Such contempt and neglect of the word of God exposeth them to strong delusion, and such delusion leads them to fight in the dark for they know not what. Thus religion is corrupted, the corruption of it defended, and irreligion and infidelity propagated, even by those who profess themselves religious people.

By these unhappy means, what numbers in our land have been drawn into deism! And by these unhappy means (if the truth were known) religion appears but in a doubtful light to many, who seem to be strict professors of it; for where it is not received in the proper evidence, there cannot be a full and strong assent of faith; and no man can receive it in its proper evidence, who does not carefully endeavour to understand the scriptures.

Thus many who talk much of the word of God, and pretend a great reverence for it, may possibly, at the last day, be ranked among the despisers of it; because although they have, perhaps, been frequently reading it, they never set themselves in good earnest to understand it, and so in effect might as well not have read it at all; for their reading it is only from a superstitious opinion, as Turks, Jews and papists turn over the books in reputation among them, not from a love of truth, or a desire of understanding truth; not to open their eyes, and to give them a more just and distinct view of the ways and dispensations of God; not to confirm and establish their minds in the faith of God, and of Christ: not for those purposes, it is much to be feared, are the scriptures read, but only in a customary, superstitious way, or at least very carelessly and superficially; and therefore there are so few professors of Christianity that grow in grace, who rise in spiritual strength, peace, love and joy; because there are so few that grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. 2 Pet. iii. 18.

Whatever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, for our instruction, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Rom. xv. 4. We have hope through that patience and comfort which is taught in the scriptures; but the grounds and reasons of that patience and comfort must be understood; otherwise we cannot establish in our minds a sure and solid hope.

Hence it is that the Christian hope, that faith and hope which overcometh the world, are so very rare; therefore so few rejoice in hope, because so few understand the scriptures, which are the ground and foundation of the true Christian hope.

Let it be remembered, that we shall have the benefit of the scriptures by studiously endeavouring to understand them, and then shall we learn, if we follow on, to know the Lord.

So far as we understand the word of truth, we shall be truly enlightened, our consciences will be rightly directed, and all our principles well established; we shall see its real value, and it will be proportionably esteemed; we shall taste its comforts, feel its power, be convinced of its Divine original, and it will be both pleasant and precious to us. The more we understand of the scriptures, with the greater pleasure we shall see the righteousness, wisdom, and goodness of all Divine dispensations, that all of them are adjusted and settled by the love of a father, and calculated to promote our happiness. This will draw our hearts to God, and shew us the propriety of acquiescing with the constitutions of his grace.

If we build upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles, our faith will stand upon a sure bottom, and not upon the weak, precarious judgment of man; henceforth we shall be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, but shall by use have our senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Thus we shall grow up into Christ in all things, in knowledge, in faith, and in love. Thus we shall be rooted and grounded in love, in the love of God, of truth, and of our neighbour. The knowledge we gain, whether it be more or less, being drawn from the fountain, will compose our spirits, and incline us neither to despise the weakness of those that know less, nor reject the instructions of those that may know more than ourselves. These weighty considerations should engage us to read the scriptures, with all possible care and diligence; and to study them with an upright desire of gaining their true sense and meaning.

We all know how much men are at variance concerning the true sense and import of scrip-

ture, one affirming that this, another that that, is the precise meaning; but this variety of sentiments is permitted to teach us to practise charity towards one another, and should convince us that we ought not to resign our understanding to others, but be ultimately guided by the scriptures themselves.

Upon the whole, it is evident from the fallible state of human nature, the prevalence of human prejudices, the defects of human reason, and the proneness of mankind in general to sin and iniquity of every kind and degree, that a certain method of direction from the all-wise God is absolutely necessary to guide them into those paths that lead to the obedience of his will, and their own truest interest and happiness; it is also as evident, that the sacred scriptures of the Old and New Testament are entirely and fully conducive to those grand important purposes, being, as before observed, *given by inspiration of God, and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

C H A P. III.

On the Authority and Excellency of the Scriptures, founded on the express and frequent Assertions of Moses, the Prophets and Apostles.

IT has been already observed, that a Divine revelation is perfectly consonant to the goodness and love of God, to the relation in which we stand to him, and the gracious purposes for which he has given us being. We have likewise endeavoured to prove the expediency of Revelation from the depraved state of human nature, and shall now observe, that no books were ever more publicly, or more commonly known, being read and heard with the greatest reverence once a week, in both Jew and Christian assemblies, for a very long course of time; the Old Testament before the coming of Our Lord, and the Old and New after his coming, to this very day. So that it is, in the nature of things, impossible that the holy scriptures should be adulterated; nor could any man, who was disposed to alter or corrupt them, promise himself success in an attempt, which must immediately be detected and confounded by thousands of copies every where dispersed, and constantly read before numerous assemblies in various languages of even more nations than ever composed the Roman empire in its largest extent.

Transcribers may, indeed, make literal mistakes, but those are easily corrected by a variety of manuscripts; and translators may differ in giving the literal sense of some words and phrases; but not so as to render the subjects and substance of the scriptures, either obscure or uncertain; for you may take any translation in any

language, or done by any party among Christians, and you will find they all agree in the great doctrines of salvation, and the several laws and duties enjoined by the Divine command; though they may not render the letter of the text in the same words, nor with the same propriety of expression.

The more perfect and exact in every point any translation is, the better it is; but it is very certain, that all things pertaining to the dispensations of God, his grace and promises, and our hopes and duty, have been preserved pure and entire in every translation, from the beginning to this day; and this is abundantly sufficient for our instruction, comfort, direction and edification.

Persons in foreign commerce, who do not understand foreign languages, are obliged to carry it on by the help of translators; and if a letter in Italian, German, Spanish or French, was put into the hands of twenty translators, it is much if every translation would not differ more or less in some expressions, and yet they might all agree with respect to the sense of the merchant; and this being all his correspondent wants to understand, he will not think it worth his pains to enter into points, or a critical propriety of phrases, which have no reference to his business.

Just so it is with respect to the translation of the bible. In more than the space of an hundred years, learning may have received considera-

ble improvements, and by that means some inaccuracies may be found in a translation, more than an hundred years old; but those who are disposed to believe the authenticity of scripture, may rest fully satisfied, that as our English translation is in itself, by far the most excellent book in our language, so it is a pure and plentiful fountain of Divine knowledge, giving a true, clear and full account of the Divine dispensations, and particularly of the Gospel of our salvation, inasmuch, that whoever studies the same, studies the only way to eternal happiness.

Thus by shewing the sufficiency of the translation, which, thanks be to God, is in our hands, the way is prepared for advancing a few arguments to establish the authority and excellency of the scriptures, and to shew they were indeed given by inspiration of God, or that, in them, the holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy spirit.

We have sufficient reason to believe, that we have in our hands the very books that were written by Moses, by the prophets, and by the apostles of Christ. Now that those books were given by inspiration from God, or that the persons who wrote them have delivered to us what they received from heaven, will appear from their own express and frequent assertions.

Moses and the prophets always declared they spake in the name of the Lord, and delivered to the people what they received in commission from him.

The apostles, likewise, assure us, that they were taught by Jesus Christ, the Son of God; were endued with the Spirit of God, and commissioned by him to preach the Gospel to all nations; and we have the utmost reason to believe that they have strictly told us the truth.

They appear to have been persons of the greatest characters for honour and probity. In the whole of their conduct we find the utmost integrity and disinterestedness, and in every part of their history and writings the utmost simplicity and impartiality.

We may carry this argument further, and set it in a still stronger light in the case of the prophets. It is certain that the prophets in a long series, one after another, gained no advantage from speaking in the name of the Lord; but on the other hand, that they incurred scorn and contempt from the generality of their countrymen. When they entered upon the ungrateful office, they renounced all worldly views, and were harassed and persecuted in proportion to their fidelity in executing their commission.

Now, there is nothing to be found in human nature, or in any state of things that can be supposed to exist, that can possibly account for this conduct, but that they really had a Divine commission from God; and their writings prove they were men of good understanding, and of a sound and excellent judgment.

The force of this argument will be seen more evidently in the case of the apostles. No history in the world hath been better preserved than that of the New Testament: there we find that Jesus Christ had gathered, while he was upon earth, some hundreds of disciples, who all made profession of faith to him, immediately after his

death, declaring that he was risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven. Particularly the apostles, with several others, went about preaching the Gospel, first in Judea, then in all parts of the Roman empire, persuading them to believe in Christ, affirming that he was the Son of God, that all the wonderful works related of him were true, and that they had a commission from heaven to teach and propagate his religion every where, though they should every where meet with the most violent opposition and the cruellest treatment.

The apostles had an amazing knowledge of God, and the perfections of the Divine nature; they set the dispensations of his wisdom, and the grand design of his love in the clearest and most amiable light; they well understood the whole system of the Divine law as a perfect rule of practice, and fixed every branch of it upon a proper foundation. They were men of the most excellent and Divine spirit next to their Lord and Master, that the world was ever acquainted with.

They were fully satisfied that what they reported was true, and they were perfectly capable of receiving the clearest evidence, and fullest satisfaction: what they reported was not a matter of meer opinion, as in the case of superstition, nor a warm suggestion, or secret impulse upon their minds, as in the case of enthusiasm, but a plain matter of fact. *We cannot, say they, but speak the things which we have seen and heard.* Acts iv. 10.

They were not things which they conceived or fancied, but which all of them, with great multitudes of people, had often and openly, for more than three years together, seen with their eyes, and heard with their ears; and that they were not mistaken or deceived, they were so fully satisfied, that they ventured all they had in the world, and even life itself, upon the truth of what they had heard and seen; consequently, their assurance must be to the highest and fullest degree of satisfaction, leaving no room for doubt or uncertainty.

It is certain the apostles, who were the familiar companions of our blessed Lord, had not the least scruple or difficulty concerning any thing related in the Gospel. They were fully convinced, perfectly assured they saw Christ upon earth, that they conversed with him, that they heard the gracious words which proceeded from his mouth, that they saw him work miracles, that they beheld him crucified and dead, that they saw him alive again in a few days, that they heard him give them a commission to preach the Gospel to all nations, and promise them success; that they actually saw him ascend up into heaven; that the Holy Ghost fell upon them on the day of Pentecost, and that by his influence they actually felt themselves endued with a new and miraculous power, which accompanied them during the course of their ministry; and to their being fully persuaded of the truth of these things, and to no other possible cause can we assign their steady and zealous endeavours to publish and spread the Gospel.

Add to all this, that the apostles were amazingly successful in preaching the Gospel, amidst all the opposition with which they met, during the course of their ministry.

These

These men in private and humble life, these defenceless men, quite destitute of all worldly power and interest, only by the force of truth, the truth of the Gospel, which they preached, and the power which they received from their Master, after he ascended into heaven, encountered the fury of a bigotted and enraged multitude, and overcame the most inveterate prejudices.

Their doctrine had a most amazing effect and influence on the minds of multitudes, who, by the power of God, at their preaching, were daily added to the church.

These considerations, weighed together in an impartial balance, will sufficiently prove the authenticity of the apostles mission and doctrine, that they received their commission and instruction from Jesus the eternal Son of God; and upon the grounds of this argument alone, the sincere believer may be fully convinced that the apostles were inspired by the spirit of God, and that they have in their writings infallibly delivered the truth, in all things pertaining to the Christian faith and doctrine.

If Jesus Christ came from the right hand of his Father to explain to us the Divine mind and will; if his apostles were taught by him, and after his ascension received the gifts of the Holy Ghost in a most miraculous manner, enabling them to perform wonders in confirmation of the doctrine they delivered; it certainly follows, that the books of Moses, and of the prophets, are undoubtedly the word of God; and that the sacred history may be depended on as a true account of things: for those books are not only asserted by Our Lord and his apostles, in general, to be the word of God, given by inspiration, and a true rule of knowledge, faith and doctrine; but particular passages are frequently produced in proof or confirmation of the doctrine they taught, and almost every single part of the history, from the beginning to the end, as of Adam, Enoch, Noah, the Deluge, Sodom and Gomor-

rah, Abraham, the Israelites, and their miraculous deliverance from Egypt, and settlement in the Land of Canaan, and all the surprizing events in their history, are referred to as undeniably authentic.

What Our Blessed Lord and his apostles have taught in the books of the New Testament, is certainly the truth, as they received it from God. Wherefore the scriptures of the Old Testament are also given by inspiration, and are a sacred repository of Divine knowledge, of undoubted credit and veracity; for Our Lord and his apostles have represented and established them as such.

Therefore the frequent and express assertions of Moses, the prophets and apostles, taken in connection with their proper circumstances, is a proof of the truth of revelation, as it stands in the scriptures.

Thus we have endeavoured to deduce the authority and excellence of the scriptures, as contained in the Holy Bible, and comprizing the books of the Old and New Testament, from the express, frequent and concurring declarations of their respective writers, viz. Moses, the prophets and apostles, and would subjoin this single remark for the comfort and edification of the pious Christian:

As you find, upon the strictest examination, an entire uniformity of doctrine, opinion and sentiment, concerning the great things of God in all the sacred writings, that they all represent the Divine nature in the same light: in short, as they all tend absolutely to lead us to the covenant of grace and the sufferings and atonement of Jesus Christ for life and salvation; let us not be wavering in our opinion, but steadfastly maintain the faith once delivered to the saints, ever remembering that He is faithful, who hath promised, and who has declared, that *heaven and earth may pass away, but not one jot or tittle of his word shall pass away.*

C H A P. IV.

On the internal Worth and Excellency of the Scriptures, as containing the best Principles of Knowledge, Holiness and Comfort.

THE arguments we have already advanced are taken from the external evidence, that the scriptures are the word of God: we now proceed to consider their internal worth and excellency, which more fully and clearly demonstrates their Divine original, and falls in with the second part of our design, which was to state the use and importance of the holy scriptures.

Considering the sacred writings as a gift and blessing from God, the father of all light, and fountain of all good, for our improvement in knowledge and holiness, in order to our being advanced to eternal glory and happiness, we

may in general conclude, that the scriptures are in worth and usefulness fully proportionable to the wisdom and goodness of the donor, and to the noble and beneficent end for which they are intended. They are a glorious display of heavenly light, irradiating the darkness of the world, which otherwise would have been involved in the blackest night of ignorance.

Let it be observed to the honour of the bible, that it is the book, which, under the Divine Providence, has preserved in the world the knowledge of the only true God, which otherwise must have been lost and extinguished; for when

God

God in his infinite wisdom was pleased to call Abraham, and separate his family to the purposes of revelation, idolatry, even in those early days, not long after the flood, was so far spread, that some of Abraham's family were idolaters, and served other gods.

So far indeed did the corruption of religion prevail, that all nations, losing the true idea of the great and glorious Creator of heaven and earth, fell into the grossest idolatry and superstition, together with every abominable vice, except the nation of the Jews, who enjoyed the word and revelation of God; and it was that very word and revelation after Our Saviour came into the world, which enlightened the Gentiles, and so generally brought them over to the worship and obedience of the great Lord of the universe.

Under God, the scripture must be owned the instrumental cause of all the true religion that is to be found in the world, and it will be established more and more; it will shine forth more and more; it will be honoured more and more, in the truth of its doctrines, in the wisdom of its precepts, in the accomplishment of its predictions and promises, and in the appearing of Our Lord at the last day to receive in his joy all that know and obey the Gospel of his grace.

Thus much may be truly said of the usefulness of scripture in general, which gives it infinitely the preference to all books of mere human composition, as it has been the means of preserving in the world the grand principles of religion, the knowledge of the being and perfections of God, and of the true spiritual worship, which alone pleaseth him, and enobles, purifies and comforts our souls; and just in proportion as the bible is received, esteemed and diligently studied, true religion has prevailed, and will always prevail and flourish. On the other hand, in proportion as the scriptures are unknown, neglected, abused and perverted; ignorance, idolatry, irreligion, error, superstition and immorality, have and will spread their gloom, and more or less infect nations and particular persons.

The scriptures contain principles, which must be allowed to be of a superior and excellent kind. The best principles that can be found of knowledge, holiness and comfort. Here the mind expatiates in a boundless field of heavenly light, and clearly views the prospects of truth, where the eye of mere nature could never have penetrated. Here we see the being of God asserted, his nature and perfections, his glorious majesty and universal sovereignty described, with the justest propriety of sentiment, and the utmost elegance of language. A few sentences in this holy book will give us much clearer conceptions of God, than all the volumes of philosophy, written by strangers to revelation. Here we are taught the various dispensations of Divine wisdom and goodness, from the beginning of the world to this day, and even to the end of time.

Here we find a two-fold covenant; of works which threaten death to every transgression; of grace which grants pardon and redemption to every believer, and promises all needful supplies to the humble and sincere.

Here we learn how God created a kingdom among the nations, or a peculiar congregation, to prevent the universal corruption of the world; and like a star in the firmament, to diffuse the light of Divine knowledge throughout the darkness of the earth.

At length we see the Messiah, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, appear to take away sin, to bring in everlasting righteousness, or salvation, to illustrate the grace of God, and give the plainest explanation of his will and duty, to shew the future world in the clearest and most awful view, and to appoint the most powerful means to attract our hearts to God, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

In the scriptures the design of our present existence in this world is represented in a manner agreeable to the appearance of things, and the wisdom and goodness of God, not to be for enjoyment, but for trial, not to gain temporal pleasures or possessions, but to discipline our souls, and to prepare them for immortal glory and honour. In particular, the many afflictions incident to our frailty, are set in a true and encouraging light, as the discipline and correction of our heavenly father; not for our destruction, but for our improvement in holiness, to purify our spirits from sensuality, to draw our regard to things heavenly and eternal, to exercise our faith, hope, patience and every virtue, which is our real excellency, and best qualification for everlasting happiness.

In the scripture we find the best principles of holiness, or of that state of mind, whereby we are habitually devoted to God and truth. For there we are shewn the nature and design of living, in a manner greatly superior to what we could have desired from our own reason and reflection. There we read, that we were formed in the image of God, inspired with understanding, raised greatly in our faculties above the rest of the creation, and made for ends proportionably great and noble; not for the mean purposes of time and sense, but for God; for his honour and favour, to shew forth his praise, and for ever enjoy his goodness. Every obligation resulting from this important consideration, even the gracious and excellent purposes of our being, is with the greatest propriety and force urged upon us.

In most parts of the holy scriptures, the love of God smiles upon us with an attractive and endearing aspect, to draw our affections to him, and to give a constancy and steadiness to our obedience in the midst of so many, and so strong temptations, when we know the necessity of trials, troubles and affliction of every kind, in this vale of tears, in order to prepare us for a residence in the heavenly mansions, where sorrow shall be no more, where all tears shall be wiped from our eyes, and endless ages shall be spent in the uninterrupted fruition of such blessings as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.

In the scripture we have the Divine displeasure against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men, set upon its true foundation; the odious and pernicious nature of sin, which is in itself false and mischievous, the greatest evil in the universe, and that which alone can deprive

us of happiness, and subject us to eternal misery.

In the word of God, his favour to pious persons is also set upon its proper foundation; the amiable and excellent nature of true holiness, which in itself is true and salutary, the greatest preparative for future glory, is represented in the most lively and engaging colours.

Here we are kindly encouraged by the Divine grace, to think of our ways, and by true repentance, to turn from whatever is repugnant to the obedience of God. Here we are directed frequently to examine our hearts, to banish thence every corrupt principle, and to keep the spring of action within us pure from any disorderly thought and inclination; to guard our spirits with a watchful eye, from every impure motion and suggestion; to be vigilant against every temptation and assault of the grand enemy of souls, that we may keep ourselves undefiled in the ways of God.

Here we are instructed in the most perfect and reasonable sobriety, temperance and self-denial, and warned of the danger of every sensual snare and allurements. Here this perishing body, with whatever can delight and adorn it; here this present world, with whatever in it that can engage our affections and esteem, are fully exposed to the judgment and censure of reason, and manifestly shewn to be emptiness and vanity, infinitely below the excellence and worth of immortal spirits; and therefore unfit to be pursued at the expence of our present integrity, or future felicity.

In the holy scriptures we are taught the ordinances of religion, both public and private, in the conscientious use of which we shall grow into perfect men in Christ Jesus; particularly we are commanded to set apart a competent portion of our time every day, and to keep the sabbath holy every week; that by serious meditation upon God's word, and pouring out our hearts before him in prayer and thanksgiving, we may renew our spiritual strength: be more and more confirmed in the habits of holiness, and find ourselves still advancing nearer to heavenly perfection.

This sketch of the principles of holiness, to be derived from the scriptures, clearly prove their Divine original and excellence, as it sets them greatly above any thing human wisdom can discover or devise.

In the scriptures we also find the best principles of comfort and refreshment to the soul. How needful are such principles in a scene of afflictions, sin and weakness! In general, under how many amiable characters; under how many sweet encouragements we are invited to put our trust in God; to look unto him, and make his name, his goodness and power, our refuge in every want, danger, difficulty and conflict? Being assured that he careth for us while we hope in him; and that He will never leave us nor forsake us! We are encouraged to hold out unto the end; persuaded, that however He may permit our sufferings and griefs, He will never forget us, but will make all things, how bitter soever, work together for our good.

Heaven is at all times open to our complaints and supplications; and the throne of God, which

is a throne of grace, is easy of access, to the breathings and desires of the penitent believing soul.

Thus we see the scriptures contain, beyond all dispute, the best principles of knowledge, of holiness and comfort. It is no less evident that they deliver the best precepts for directing all our actions, which may be reduced to three heads; our duty to God, to our neighbour, and to ourselves.

We are taught to worship God with a sincere admiration of his glory and perfections, with profound reverence of his greatness, with humble adoration of his sovereignty, with the highest love and esteem for his excellency and amiableness, with joy and gratitude for his goodness, and with a heart truly devoted to his honour and glory.

To our neighbour, we are directed to perform not only justice, truth and equity, but also unfeigned charity, the most extensive kindness and benevolence.

To ourselves, we owe self-preservation and self-government; and the scriptures admonish us to take the wisest care of our being, by cultivating and guarding our minds, and by mortifying all inordinate affections and passions.

In short, all that our reason can find in the law or religion of nature, is most clearly and beautifully displayed to us by revelation, and moreover, the wisdom of God has not only perfected and supplied our deficiencies, but hath discovered to us the riches of goodness, knowledge and power, infinitely beyond what our natural faculties could ever have attained.

It is further evident, that the writings both of the Old and New Testament form a storehouse of the most sacred and useful knowledge, admirably adapted to the improvement of our minds in faith and holiness, and calculated, by a proper attention to them, to produce our future and eternal happiness.

Such is the intrinsic excellency of the Holy Scriptures, and such the benefits that will undoubtedly be received from them by those who strictly adhere to the Divine precepts contained therein. The good and pious Christian will be ever happy in the reflection of having so valuable a treasure in his hands, and, with the most distinguished satisfaction of mind, may thus address himself to the Great and beneficent Author.

Lord, I have made thy word my choice,
My lasting heritage;
There shall my noblest powers rejoice,
My warmest thoughts engage.

I'll read the hist'ries of thy love,
And keep thy laws in sight,
While thro' thy promises I rove,
With ever fresh delight.

'Tis a broad land of wealth unknown,
Where springs of life arise,
Seeds of immortal bliss are sown,
And hidden glory lies.

The best relief that mourners have;
It makes our sorrows blest;
Our fairest hope beyond the grave,
And our eternal rest.

C H A P. V.

Containing an Account of the final Destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, as foretold by Our Blessed Redeemer a short Time before his Death.

HAVING, in the preceding chapters, given an ample display of the great excellency of the Sacred Writings contained in the Old and New Testament, we shall, in this chapter, give a comprehensive detail of the dreadful and final destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem, which was foretold by Our Blessed Redeemer a short time before his death.

At the time Our Lord predicted this fatal catastrophe to the Jews he likewise foretold, that it would be preceded by strange commotions and dreadful signs from heaven, such as had never before been seen. *Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines and pestilences: and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.* Luke xxi. 10, 11.

That this part of the prediction was most amply fulfilled is evident from the relation given us by Josephus, the celebrated Jewish historian, who not only recites the strange prodigies which happened previous to the breaking out of the war, but likewise gives us a very particular account of the whole progress of it, from the first revolting of the Jews to the final destruction of the city and temple by Titus, son of the emperor Vespasian.

The prodigies, which preceded the war, as related by Josephus, are these:

A comet, which bore the resemblance of a sword, hung over the city of Jerusalem for the space of a whole year.

A short time before the revolt of the Jews, a most remarkable and extraordinary light was seen about the altar of the temple. It happened at the ninth hour of the night preceding the celebration of the feast of the passover, and continued about half an hour, giving a light equal to that of day. Ignorant persons considered this unusual and wonderful appearance as an happy omen; but those of superior judgment averred that it was a prediction of approaching war; and their opinion was fully confirmed by the event.

The eastern gate of the interior part of the temple was composed of solid brass, and was of such an immense weight, that it was the labour of twenty men to make it fall every night. It was secured with iron bolts and bars, which were let down into a large threshold, consisting of an entire stone. About the fifth hour of the night this gate opened without any human assistance, immediate notice of which being given to the officer on duty, he lost no time in endeavouring to restore it to its former situation; but it was with the utmost difficulty that he accomplished it. There were likewise some ignorant people

who deemed this to be a second good omen, insinuating that Providence had thereby set open a gate of blessings to the people; but persons of superior discernment were of a contrary opinion, and concluded that the opening of the gate predicted the success of the enemy, and destruction of the city.

A short time after the celebration of the feast of the passover, before the setting of the sun, the appearance of chariots and armed men were seen in the air, in various parts of the country, passing round the city among the clouds.

While the priests were going to perform the duties of their function, according to custom, in the inner temple, on the feast of Pentecost, they at first heard an indistinct murmuring, which was succeeded by a voice, repeating, in the most plain and earnest manner, these words, "Let us be gone, let us depart hence."

But the most extraordinary circumstance of the whole was this. Some time before the commencement of the war, and while the city appeared to be in the most perfect peace, and abounded in plenty, there came to the feast of tabernacles, a simple countryman, the son of one Ananias, who, without any previous intimation, exclaimed as follows: "A voice from the east; a voice from the west; a voice from the four quarters of the world; a voice to Jerusalem, and a voice to the temple; a voice to men and women newly married, and a voice to the nation at large." In this manner did he continue his exclamations, in various places through all the streets of the city; at which some persons of eminence in the city were so offended, that they ordered him to be apprehended, and severely whipped. This was accordingly done, but he bore his sufferings not only without complaint, but without saying a word in his own defence; and no sooner was his punishment ended, than he proceeded in his exclamations as before. By this time the magistrates were suspicious (and indeed, not without reason) that what he had said proceeded from the Divine impulse of a superior power that influenced his words. In consequence of this they sent him to the governor of Judea, who directed that he should be whipped with the greatest severity. This order was so strictly obeyed, that his very bones were seen, notwithstanding which he neither wept nor supplicated, but, in a voice of mourning, between each stroke, exclaimed, "Woe, woe to Jerusalem!" From this very extraordinary behaviour the governor was induced to interrogate him with respect to his character, and the places of his birth and residence, and what could prompt

prompt him to act as he had done. He would not, however, make any answer to either of these questions; upon which the governor found himself under the necessity of dismissing him, as a man out of his senses. From this period to the commencement of the war, he was never known either to visit or speak to any of the citizens, nor was he heard to say any other words than the melancholy sentence, "Woe, woe to Jerusalem. Those who daily punished him received no ill language from him; nor did those who fed him receive his thanks; but what he generally said to every one was, an ominous prediction. It was remarked that on public festivals he was more vociferous than at other times; and in the manner before-mentioned he continued for the space of more than three years; nor did his voice or strength appear to fail him till his predictions were verified by the siege of Jerusalem. As soon as this event took place, he went for the last time, on the wall of the city, and exclaimed with a more powerful voice than usual, "Woe, woe to this city, this temple, and this people;" and concluded his lamentation by saying, "Woe, woe, be to myself." He had no sooner spoken these words than, in the midst of these predictions, he was destroyed by a stone thrown from an engine.

Having thus mentioned the very singular prodigies which preceded the destruction of Jerusalem, as related by Josephus, we shall now proceed to give an account of the circumstances which occasioned the war, together with its progress, which at length brought on the final ruin and destruction of the Jewish state.

The commencement of the war was occasioned, partly by the infamous behaviour of Albinus the Roman governor of Judea, and partly by the refractoriness of many of the principal people of Jerusalem. Albinus was a man totally abandoned to every degree of vice. Avarice, corruption, extortion, oppression, public and private, were equally familiar to him. He accepted bribes in civil and personal causes, and oppressed the nation by the weight of arbitrary taxes. If any offender, however atrocious, convicted of robbery or assault by himself, or any other magistrate, was under sentence of the law, a friend and a bribe would ensure his liberty; and this governor never found any man guilty who had money to procure his innocence.

At this time there was a strong faction in Jerusalem, who, wishing for a change of government, the most opulent of them privately compounded with Albinus, in case any disturbance should happen. There was likewise a set of men who would not be easy while the state was at peace; and Albinus engaged these in his interest. The leaders of these mutineers were each attended by daring fellows of their own turn of mind; but the governor was the most abandoned villain of the whole, and had guards always ready to execute his orders. The event proved that the injured did not dare to complain; those who were in any danger of losing part of their property were glad to compound to save the rest, and the receiver proved the worst of thieves. In short, there appeared to be no sense of honour remaining; and a new slavery seemed to be predicted from the

number of tyrants then in power, through the land of Judea.

Such was the character, and such were the manners of Albinus, who, in a short time, was, by order of the emperor Nero, removed from his office, and Gessius Florus placed in his stead. This, however, was far from being an advantageous change for the Jews, Florus being so much more abandoned in his principles than the former, as not to admit even of the least comparison. Albinus was treacherous, but observed a secrecy in his crimes that had the appearance of modesty; but Florus was so consummate in his wickedness, that he boasted of his iniquitous behaviour, and declared himself the general enemy of the nation. His conduct in the province he governed was more like that of an executioner than a governor; for he treated all the people like criminals, and extended his rapine and tyranny beyond all bounds. He was equally devoid of compassion, and dead to all sense of honour; cruel to the unfortunate, and utterly abandoned in cases so enormous that impudence itself would blush at the recollection of them. He exceeded all the men of his time in making lies and imposition pass for truth; and was equally artful in discovering new modes of doing mischief. He gave such encouragement to the sons of rapine and plunder, that he might as well have proclaimed that every man was at liberty to seize whatever he could lay his hands on, provided that he himself obtained a share of the plunder. His avarice was carried to such an extravagant pitch, that the inhabitants of the province were reduced to degrees of poverty little short of starving; and many of them left the country in absolute want of the necessities of life.

The daily oppressions of Florus on the people throughout the province of Judea irritated them to the most violent degree, and being fearful lest they should lay a complaint against him before the emperor, Florus, to avoid the consequences of such a proceeding, resolved to continue his oppressions till they should enter into open rebellion, whereby his villainous proceedings would be greatly lessened in the eyes of his master. This had the desired effect, for the factious party in Jerusalem, who for some time had been inclined to revolt, encouraging the greater part of the people of that city to oppose the measures of Florus, an insurrection took place, and a resolution was formed to oppose the Romans with all their might.

It happened at this time that king Agrippa was at Jerusalem, and being fearful of the dreadful consequences that were likely to ensue, he summoned the people together, and strongly exhorted them to desist from any violent proceedings, telling them that if they did, it must inevitably prove their destruction. He advised them to a patient submission to Florus, till another governor should be appointed by the emperor, who, in all probability, would remove the grievances under which they then laboured. But this, instead of subsiding, only inflamed the passions of the multitude, who not only made use of the most opprobrious language, but likewise mal-treated the king. In consequence of this Agrippa left Jerusalem, previous to which he dispatched messengers,

sengers to Florus, who was then at Cesarea, informing him of the manner in which he had been treated, and requesting that he would immediately send a proper force to repel the insurgents.

No sooner had Agrippa left Jerusalem than the factious Jews began to carry their design into execution. To this purpose great numbers of them got privately into the Roman garrison called Massada, where they surprized the soldiers, every one of whom they put to death, and, in their stead, substituted a guard of their own people.

About this juncture there happened likewise another commotion in the temple of Jerusalem. A bold and factious young man, named Eleazar (son of the then high-priest) who was at that time a military officer, persuaded a number of his friends among the priests not to accept of any offering or sacrifice but from the Jews. This circumstance laid the foundation of a war with the Romans; for, in consequence of the request of Eleazar, when the sacrifices of Nero were presented, according to custom, to be offered up for the success of the people of Rome, they were rejected. So new and extraordinary a proceeding gave great offence to the high-priest and persons of distinction, who protested against it, and earnestly recommended the continuance of so reasonable a custom as that of offering prayers for princes and governors. But the insurgents, relying on the strength of their numbers, were obstinate for obedience to their orders: every one who wished for innovation was on their side, and they considered Eleazar, who was a man of courage, and in office, as the head of their party.

In consequence of the great obstinacy of the insurgents, the high-priest and most eminent of the Pharisees assembled together in order to deliberate on the most proper mode of proceeding at so critical a juncture, being apprehensive that if the tumult was not, by some means or other, suppressed, it must be attended with the most fatal consequences. Having consulted for some time, they at length resolved to try what could be done to appease the passions of the multitude; and for this purpose they assembled the people before the brazen gate, on the inside of the temple towards the east. Here they represented to them the rashness of the enterprize in which they had engaged, and which would certainly involve their country in a ruinous war. They then adverted to the unreasonable ground of the dispute, and the evident injustice on which it was founded: they told them that their ancestors were so far from refusing or forbidding the oblations of strangers (which they would have deemed a kind of impiety) that they considered them, in some degree, as a part of their own worship. They likewise mentioned the presents which had, from time to time, been made by strangers to the temple, which were still preserved as ornaments in that sacred place, and in remembrance of those who gave them. They farther told them, that the provoking a war with the Romans would be at least disgraceful, if not ruinous, to Jerusalem: that new modes of religion would certainly be adopted, as nothing less could be expected by the interdiction of every sort of people, except Jews, from offering oblations and prayers to

God in his holy temple. It was urged that this was such an inhuman injunction as could not be excused in the case of a private person; but that it was utterly unpardonable to extend it to the whole people of Rome, and, eventually, even excommunicating the emperor himself. It was asked what would be the consequence if such contempt should be returned, and those who had refused others the liberty of offering their prayers and oblations, should themselves be denied the privilege of public worship. They concluded with telling them, that if they persisted in their obstinacy, the city would be left void of discipline; and every ill consequence would certainly happen, unless they repented of all the uncharitable things they had done, and made satisfaction, before the emperor should be informed of their violent proceedings.

But all these circumstances were of none effect: the insurgents, who wished for war rather than peace, were determined to prosecute their design with the utmost vigour; and in this they were farther encouraged from the conduct of the Levites, who quitted the altar, and joined themselves to their party.

The high-priest, and people of rank, finding the populace despised all obedience to law, and that themselves would probably be the first that would be censured by the Romans, consulted together what means were the most eligible to take in order to save themselves and country from destruction. After deliberating for some time on this head, they at length resolved to send deputies to Florus and Agrippa, representing the conduct of the people in its true light, and requesting them to send forces to Jerusalem, in order to put a speedy end to the rebellion.

The news of the insurrection at Jerusalem was highly agreeable to Florus, whose disposition led him to inflame, rather than endeavour to suppress, the war. This was evidently evinced by his delay in giving an answer to the deputies, knowing thereby that it would afford the rebels an opportunity of augmenting their forces. On the contrary, Agrippa consulted only the general welfare, being desirous of doing all in his power to save both parties; and by this means to secure Jerusalem in the possession of the Jews, and bind the Jews in subjection to the Romans. To effect this he dispatched two thousand auxiliary horse to Jerusalem, under the command of Darius, a very able and experienced general. On their arrival at the city they were joined by the rulers and high-priest, together with the rest of the people who wished for peace. The insurgents had already possessed themselves of the temple and lower city; and therefore the royal troops immediately seized on the upper city, being resolved, if possible, to reduce the rebels to subjection. It was not long before a skirmish took place, and the combatants on both sides made use of their bows and arrows, with which they galled each other incessantly. The insurgents made their attacks in the most desperate manner; but the royal forces appeared to have a superior knowledge of the military art. The principal operation the latter had in view was to compel the sacrilegious faction to abandon the temple; while, on the contrary, Eleazar and his adherents

adherents laboured with equal zeal, to get the upper town into their possession. The contest continued without intermission for some days, in all which time, though there was a great slaughter on both sides, not the least advantage was obtained by either.

At length, however, the insurgents, being resolved to engage in the most hazardous enterprise, assaulted the king's troops with such violence as to throw them into the greatest confusion and disorder; and this advantage they improved to such a degree, that, equally overcome by superior numbers and more determined resolution, the royal troops were obliged to abandon the upper town, of which the rebels immediately possessed themselves, and thereby became masters of the whole city.

Elated with this success, the insurgents immediately repaired to the house of the high-priest, which they first plundered, and then reduced to ashes. This being done, they resolved, in the next place, to set fire to the offices of record, and consume both them, and all their contents. As soon as this was known, the persons who had the care of those places were so terrified, that they immediately abandoned their trust, each man seeking his own security by flight; on which both offices and records were reduced to ashes.

The next day after the insurgents had committed these outrages, they made an attack on the castle of Antonia, and, after only two days resistance, made themselves masters of it, having done which, they burnt the castle, and put all the garrison to the sword. After this they proceeded to the palace, in which were the troops sent by Agrippa to suppress the insurrection: they immediately invested the place, and having divided themselves into four bodies, made an attempt to undermine the walls; while those within were under the necessity of remaining inactive, as their strength was insufficient for them to rally forth with any hopes of success. The assailants continued their operations with great resolution for several days, till at length the besieged, finding they must either fall by the sword, or be starved into compliance, deserted the place, and fled for security to the castles of Hippon, Phasaël and Mariamne. But no sooner had the soldiers quitted the place, than the rebels immediately broke in, and unmercifully put to death every person they met with; having done which, they plundered the palace of all its valuable furniture, and concluded the outrage by setting fire to the camp.

While these things were transacting at Jerusalem, a most dreadful massacre took place in Cæsarea, not less than 20,000 Jews being, at the instigation of Florus, put to death by the Romans in one day. This horrid slaughter so irritated the Jews, that they became universally outrageous, and dividing themselves into distinct bodies, dispersed into different parts, with a full resolution of seeking revenge on their enemies. They first laid waste a great number of villages in Syria, and then destroyed several principal cities, among which were Philidelphia, Gibonitis, Garasea, Pella, and Scythopolis. They then proceeded to Sebaste and Askalon, both of which

places surrendered without opposition. Having effectually reduced these two fortresses, they next proceeded to Gaza, which they totally destroyed; and continuing their ravages, laid waste a great number of villages on the frontiers of Syria, putting to death all the inhabitants wherever they went.

On the other hand the Syrians wreaked their vengeance on all the Jews they could find, not only in country places, but in many principal cities throughout Syria, all of whom they put to the sword. In short, the whole country was in the most deplorable situation, there being, as it were, two armies in every city; nor was any safety to be expected for the one, but in the destruction of the other. In the city of Alexandria no less than 50,000 Jews were put to death by the Romans; and the only places in which the Jews escaped the general carnage were, Sidon, Apamia and Antioch.

Cestius, the governor of Syria (who at this time resided at Antioch) observing the contempt in which the Jews were held throughout the whole province, resolved to take advantage of this circumstance, and prosecute the war against them with the utmost vigour. For this purpose he raised a considerable army, consisting of the whole twelfth legion which he commanded at Antioch; two thousand select men from the other legions, and four divisions of horse, exclusive of the royal auxiliaries, which consisted of two thousand horse and three thousand foot, all armed with bows and arrows.

With this formidable army Cestius left Antioch, and proceeded towards Ptolemais, in his way to which he was joined by a great number of people from different parts of the country. The first material place he came to was Zabulon, (otherwise called Andron) the most defensible city of Galilee, and by which Judea was divided from Ptolemais. On his arrival at this place he found that it was amply stored with all kinds of provisions, but not a single person was to be seen in the town, the inhabitants having, on his approach, fled to the mountains for security. In consequence of this Cestius gave his soldiers permission to plunder the city; which being done, he ordered it to be burnt, and levelled with the ground. He then proceeded to several other places in the neighbourhood of Zabulon, all of which he served in like manner, and then repaired to Ptolemais. On this occasion the Syrians were so anxious for obtaining of plunder, that they could not be prevailed on to retire in time; but many of them remained behind, and on the retreat of Cestius with the greater part of his forces, the Jews, taking courage, fell on the plunderers, and near two thousand of them were put to the sword.

After staying a short time at Ptolemais, Cestius proceeded to Cæsarea, from whence he dispatched a division of his army to Joppa, with orders that if they could get an easy possession of the place, they should take it; but if they found that the inhabitants made preparations to defend it, they should, in that case, wait till the arrival of the rest of the army. The Romans, however, no sooner arrived at the place than they immediately laid siege to it, and, with very little diffi-

culty, even made themselves masters of it. The inhabitants were so far from being able to resist the attack, that they had not even an opportunity of making their escape; so that the whole, both men, women and children, were put to the sword, the number amounting to not less than eight thousand. The Romans then plundered the city, and having reduced it to ashes, they returned to their general at Cesarea. In the mean time a body of Roman horse made similar destruction in the neighbourhood of Cesarea, where they ravaged the country, killed great numbers of the inhabitants, took possession of their effects, and then burnt their towns to the ground.

From Cesarea Cestius departed with his army to Antipatris, on his arrival at which place he was informed that a great number of Jews had got into the tower of Aphec, whither he sent a number of his troops to rout them. The Jews, finding themselves totally unable to sustain the shock, abandoned the place to the Romans, who first stripped it of every thing that was valuable, and then set fire to it; having done which they departed, but not without destroying several villages in its neighbourhood, and putting such of the inhabitants as could not effect their escape to the sword.

Cestius proceeded with his army from Antipatris to Lydda, in which city he found no more than fifty men, all the rest being gone to Jerusalem, in order to be present at the celebration of the feast of tabernacles. The remaining fifty Cestius ordered to be put to death, which being done, he set fire to the town, and then proceeded by the way of Bethoron, to a place named Gabath, about fifty furlongs from Jerusalem, where he encamped his army.

The Jews, convinced of the great danger they were in, from the appearance of so formidable an army, laid aside their former scruples with regard to their sacred days, and applied themselves strictly to their arms. Imagining that their force was now sufficient to cope with the Romans, they made a desperate sally on the sabbath-day, regardless of their antient prejudices, and, with a furious uproar, attacked the enemy. On the first charge they put the front of the Romans into great disorder, and penetrated so far into the main body of the army, that had it not been for a detachment of foot which remained entirely unbroken, and a party of horse that unexpectedly came to their relief, Cestius and his whole army would have been certainly cut to pieces. In this encounter four hundred of the Roman cavalry were slain, and one hundred and fifteen of the infantry; while of the Jews there fell a very small number. The main body of the Jews, retreating in good order, went back into the city; and in the mean time the Romans retired towards Bethoron. A strong party of the Jews, however, under the command of one Gioras, pursued the enemy, several of whom they killed: they likewise seized a number of carriages, and a quantity of baggage, which they found in the pursuit, all of which they conveyed safe to Jerusalem.

Cestius and his army remained in the field three days after this action, during which time a party of the Jews was stationed on the adjacent

hills to watch his movements. On the fourth day Cestius advanced with his whole army, in a regular manner, to the borders of Jerusalem, where many of the people were so terrified by the faction, that they were afraid to take any step of consequence; while some of the principal promoters of the sedition were so alarmed at the conduct and discipline of the Romans on their march, that they retired from the extremities of the city, and took refuge in the temple. Cestius in his way to Jerusalem burnt Cenopolis, and a place which was denominated the wood-market. From thence he advanced to the upper town of the city, and pitched his camp at a small distance from the palace.

While Cestius was thus situated with his army, Ananus, and several other men among the Jews, called aloud to the Roman general, offering to open the gates to him; but either thro' diffidence or fear of their fidelity, he was so long in considering whether or not he should accept the offer, that he was at length restrained from it by the people, who were so irritated at Ananus and his companions, that they compelled them to retreat from the walls of the city, and retire to their own houses for protection.

After this the Jews, with a view of defending the walls of the city, repaired to the different turrets, and, for five successive days, defended them against all the efforts of the Romans, tho' they pushed the attack with the utmost impetuosity. On the sixth day Cestius made an assault on the north side of the temple, with a select force chosen from his troops and bowmen; but the Jews discharged such a violent quantity of shot and stones from the porch and galleries, that the Romans were not only repeatedly compelled to retire from the severity of the charge, but, for a time, obliged to abandon the enterprise.

Being thus repulsed, the Romans, after some time, had recourse to the following singular invention. Those in front placing their bucklers against the wall of the city, and covering their heads and shoulders with them, those who stood next closed their bucklers to the former, till the whole body was covered, and made the appearance of a tortoise. The bucklers being thus conjoined were proof against all the darts and arrows of the enemy; so that the Romans had the opportunity of undermining the walls without being exposed to danger. The first thing they did was, to attempt setting fire to the gates of the temple, which circumstance so terrified the faction, that they considered themselves as ruined, and many absolutely abandoned the town; nor were the quiet party less elevated with joy than the rebels were depressed by despair.

While things were in this situation, the people demanded that the gates might be opened to Cestius, whom they considered in the light of a friend and preserver. This was a most favourable opportunity for Cestius, and had he maintained the siege only a short time longer, the whole town must have submitted. But, not considering the good disposition of the people in general, or reflecting on the despair into which the rebels were thrown, as if he had been infatuated, he suddenly drew off his men, and, contrary to all

all sense and reason, abandoned the siege, at a time when his prospects were better than they had been at any former period. The revolvers were so much encouraged at this unexpected circumstance, that they attacked the rear of Cestius's army, and destroyed great numbers both of his cavalry and infantry. On the first night after Cestius retreated from the siege, he took up his residence in a camp which he had fortified at a place named Scopus; and on the following day he continued his march, but was closely pursued by the Jews, who annoyed him as he went, and destroyed a considerable number of his troops. On the whole, this was a very disastrous attack to the Romans, and attended with very little loss on the part of the Jews.

Cestius, having retreated as far as Gabaoh, there encamped with his army, and, during two days, employed his thoughts in what manner he should direct his future conduct. On the third day he found that the Jews were so greatly increased in numbers, that the whole face of the country was covered with them; and that should he continue any longer at Gabaoh, it must be attended with the most fatal consequences. He therefore issued orders that the army should be eased of all their incumbrances, that they might march with the greater expedition: he likewise directed that all the mules, asses, and other beasts of burden should be killed, except only as many as were necessary to carry such weapons and machines as might afterwards be wanted for their own defence.

In this situation the Roman army proceeded towards Bethoron, Cestius marching at their head. While they continued in the open country, they did not receive any interruption from the Jews; but as they advanced into hollow ways and defiles, the enemy, who closely pursued, charged them in front and rear, and discharging repeated volleys of arrows and darts, prodigious numbers of them were killed. The Romans, however, with great difficulty, got at length to Bethoron under cover of the night; upon which all the passes near that place were secured by the Jews, in order to prevent the retreat of their adversaries.

Cestius, finding in what a disagreeable manner he was surrounded, and that it would be impossible to retreat within sight of the enemy, devised a scheme to favour his escape. Having stationed four hundred of his troops on the tops of the houses, he ordered that they should act the part of centinels, calling as loud as they were able to the watches and guards, as if the army was still in its encampment. While this plan was going forward, Cestius collected his troops with which he left Bethoron, and continued to march with them during the whole course of the night. In the morning, when the Jews found that the place had been deserted by the main body of the army during the night, they were so enraged, that they immediately attacked the four hundred Romans who had acted as centinels, slew every one of them, and then instantly marched in pursuit of Cestius; but his troops having obtained a whole night's march on them, and proceeding with the utmost rapidity on the following day, it was not possible to overtake them. Such were the hurry and confusion in

which the Romans had fled, that they dropped by the way all their slings, machines, and other instruments for battery and attack; which being seized by the pursuers, they afterwards turned them to their own advantage. The Jews pursued their enemies as far as Antipatris; but finding it in vain to continue the pursuit, they carefully preserved the engines, stripped the dead, collected all the booty they could, and then returned towards Jerusalem, singing songs of triumph for so important a victory. In this contest there fell, of the Romans and their auxiliaries, three hundred and eighty cavalry, and not less than four thousand of the infantry.

Elated with this distinguished success, the Jews, on their return to Jerusalem, appointed one Joseph, the son of Gorion, a man of great eminence, together with the high-priest, as governors of the city. They likewise sent commanders into the different provinces of Judea and Galilee, in order to secure those places against the power of the Romans. Among others Joseph, or Josephus, (the celebrated Jewish historian) was sent to take upon him the government of Galilee, the principal towns in which he immediately ordered to be fortified, and every necessary preparation made for attacking the enemy, should they attempt to invade that province.

In the mean time, the emperor Nero, having received intelligence of the defeat of Cestius in Judea, was thrown into the utmost consternation; but he dissembled his fears, by ostentatiously asserting that it was owing to the misconduct of his general, and not to their own valour, that the Jews were indebted for victory; for he imagined that it would be derogatory to the sovereign state of the Roman empire, and to his superiority over other princes, to discover a concern at the common occurrences of life. During this contention between his fear and his pride, he industriously sought for a man qualified to assume the important task of chastising the revolted Jews, preserving the east in tranquillity, and the allegiance of several other nations who had manifested a disposition to free themselves from the power of the Romans. On mature deliberation, Nero at length judged Vespasian to be the only man possessed of abilities adequate to the important enterprize. Vespasian was then arrived to an advanced age, and, from his early years, had been engaged in a continued succession of military exploits. From these considerations, together with his approved courage and fidelity, and his having sons for hostages of his loyalty, the emperor determined to appoint him to the command of his army in Syria.

In consequence of this resolution, Vespasian, having received his commission from Nero, which he accompanied with the strongest professions of friendship and fidelity, commanded his son Titus to lead the fifth and tenth legions into Alexandria, while himself departed from Achaia, and, crossing the Hellespont, proceeded by land into Syria, where he assembled all the Roman forces, and the auxiliaries which the princes of the adjoining places had gathered together.

In the mean time the Jews, being transported to the most excessive degree of extravagance by the conquest they had gained over the Roman army

army under the command of Cestius, determined to prosecute the war with the utmost vigour. Accordingly they formed their best troops into a body, and marched against the ancient city of Ascalon, with a resolution of attempting the reduction of that place, against the inhabitants of which they had the most implacable enmity. The Jewish army was under the command of Niger, of Perea, Silas, a Babylonian, and John, an Essene, who were men equally celebrated for valour and skill in the management of war.

Ascalon was surrounded by a wall of surprising strength; but the whole garrison consisted only of a troop of cavalry and a company of foot, under the command of an officer named Anthony. The Jews, being impatient to encounter the Romans, marched with the utmost expedition, intending to attack them by surprize; but Anthony getting intelligence of their design, stationed his cavalry without the town, in order to repulse the enemy. The Roman forces were composed of veteran troops, compleatly armed, well disciplined, and perfectly obedient to order. The Jews had the superiority in point of numbers; but they were indifferently equipped for, and by no means expert in the art of war, and the army consisted entirely of infantry. Anthony's troops received the first charge with great resolution: his horse broke the first ranks of the adverse army, which were immediately put to the rout: great numbers were crushed to death by their own people, and wherever they fled they were pursued by the Romans. The Jews exerted their utmost endeavours to rally their forces; but this was prevented by the Romans, who pursued the advantage they had gained till ten thousand of the enemy were slain, among whom were the two generals, John and Silas. Niger, the surviving general, with the rest of the Jews, most of whom were wounded, escaped to a town in Idumea, named Sabis.

The resolution of the Jews, however, was not abated by the terrible defeat they had sustained; but, founding their hopes of success on the recollection of former victories, they were animated to a more violent desire of revenge. They therefore collected together a much more numerous army than before, and determined to make a second attempt against Ascalon, notwithstanding their want of military skill and discipline, the fatal effects of which they had already experienced. But all their hopes were soon vanished; for being surprized by an ambush which Anthony had stationed in the way they were to pass, they were entirely routed, without being able to form themselves into the order of battle. Eight thousand Jews were slain on the spot; and the rest, with Niger their general, put to flight. Being closely pursued by the Romans, Niger sought refuge in a castle belonging to the village of Bezedel. This castle was supposed to be impregnable; and therefore as the only effectual means of destroying both Niger and the castle, the Romans set fire to it, after which they departed, triumphing in the idea that the leader of the Jews must inevitably perish in the flames. Niger, being sensible that this must be the case, if he continued in his station, threw himself from the top of the castle into a vault of considerable depth,

where, after three days, he was found alive by his friends, who were searching for his remains, in order to give them interment. This unexpected event transported the Jews from a state of despondency into the contrary extreme of joy; and the preservation of their general, whom they considered as an instrument essentially necessary in the prosecution of the war, they attributed to Divine interposition.

During these transactions Vespasian arrived with his army at Antioch, where king Agrippa, attended by his troops, was waiting to receive him. From hence he proceeded to Ptolemais, where the inhabitants of Sepphoris, a city in Galilee, had assembled on occasion of his expected arrival. These were a well-disposed people, and being conscious of the great power of the Romans, as well as desirous of making provision for their own safety, they acknowledged Cestius Gallus as their governor, previous to the arrival of Vespasian, binding themselves to act in perfect obedience to his commands, even against their own countrymen, and at the same time declaring their allegiance to the state of Rome. They received a garrison from Cestius Gallus, and solicited Vespasian to grant them a number of cavalry and infantry sufficient for their defence, in case they should be attacked by the Jews. Vespasian readily complied with this request; for Sepphoris being the most extensive and strongest city in Galilee, he judged it expedient to keep so important a place in a proper state of defence.

The number of troops granted by Vespasian to the people of Sepphoris were, a thousand cavalry and six thousand infantry, the whole of which were placed under the command of Placidus the tribune. After these troops had been drawn up on the great plain, the foot, for the security of the city, were quartered within the walls, and the horse were ordered into the camp. The Roman troops made daily excursions into the neighbourhood, where they committed many acts of violence, and greatly incommoded Joseph (the governor of Galilee) and his friends. Not satisfied with ravaging the country, they made booty of whatever they could obtain from the towns, and treated the inhabitants with so much severity that they were under the necessity of remaining within the walls.

Matters being thus circumstanced, Joseph exerted his utmost efforts to make himself master of Sepphoris; but he found it so strongly fortified, that it appeared to be impregnable, and, despairing of success, either by stratagem or force, he abandoned all farther thoughts of the enterprize. This so irritated the Romans, that they subjected the people to the most terrible calamities of fire and sword, putting those who attempted resistance to instant death, reducing the rest to slavery, and making booty of all the property they could find.

In the mean time Titus repaired to his father Vespasian at Ptolemais, taking with him the fifth, tenth and fifteenth legions, which were reckoned to be the best disciplined and most courageous of the Roman troops. These were followed by a troop of horse from Cesarea, with a great number of auxiliaries, both horse and foot,

from

from other places. The whole army amounted to sixty thousand, exclusive of the train of baggage, and a great number of domestics, most of whom, having been trained to the practice of war, were but little inferior to the soldiers in courage and dexterity.

During the time Vespasian was with his son Titus at Ptolemais, he ordered every necessary measure to be pursued for the proper regulation and supply of his army. In the mean time Placidus made an excursion into, and overran, the whole province of Judea, where he took a great number of prisoners, most of whom he put to death. These were people destitute of courage, but such as possessed a greater share of intrepidity made a courageous resistance, and secured themselves in the cities, and other places of strength, which had been fortified by Joseph. Placidus determined to direct his arms against those places where the Galileans had fled for sanctuary; and Jotapata being the strongest hold they possessed, he resolved that his first exploit should be to attempt the reduction of that place. The inhabitants of Jotapata, however, gaining intelligence of the design of Placidus, and that he was marching with all expedition against the place, sallied from the town, in order to give him battle. They attacked the Romans by surprise, and as the fate of their wives, children and country, depended on the issue of the contest, they fought with the most astonishing bravery, and with such success, that they effectually repulsed the enemy, after which Placidus drew off his army.

Vespasian, having resolved to make an excursion into Galilee, issued marching orders to his troops, according to the military discipline of the Romans, and departing from Ptolemais, encamped his army on the frontiers of Galilee. He might, indeed, have advanced farther, but his stopping there was designed to strike a terror into the enemy by the formidable appearance of his army. In this conjecture he was not deceived, for the news of his approach threw the Jews into the greatest consternation; and Joseph's followers, who were encamped at some distance from Sepphoris, deserted their leader, even before the enemy came in sight. Being thus abandoned, and finding that the spirits of the Jews were entirely depressed, that the majority of his people had already joined the enemy, and that the rest seemed inclined to follow their example, he retreated to Tiberias, accompanied by a few of his people whom he could trust, and who still maintained their fidelity.

The first place Vespasian laid siege to after his arrival in Galilee, was the city of Gadara, which not having a sufficient number of inhabitants to defend it, he subdued, with very little difficulty, on the first assault. The natural enmity of the Romans against the Jews, together with a principle of revenge for their having defeated Cestius, induced them to put the inhabitants of the town promiscuously to the sword; and, not satisfied with setting fire to the conquered city, they burnt, and utterly laid waste, the neighbouring small towns and villages, and subjected the inhabitants to slavery.

In the mean time Joseph (the leader of the

Jews in Galilee) left Tiberias, and retired to the strong city of Jotapata, which gave great encouragement to the Jews of that place. Joseph's retreat was soon made known to Vespasian by a deserter, who advised the besieging of Jotapata, observing that, if Joseph could be taken, the war must inevitably terminate to the disadvantage of the Jews. Pleased with this information, and hoping to get into his power the person whom he considered as the most formidable of his enemies, Vespasian dispatched Placidus and Æbutius (the latter of whom was one of the most celebrated men of the army for bravery and military skill) with a thousand cavalry, commanding them to environ the city with the greatest expedition, and, if possible, prevent the escape of Joseph.

The next morning Vespasian issued orders for his whole army to march, and, in the afternoon of the same day, encamped about seven furlongs to the north of the city. The Romans being greatly fatigued by their march, did not attempt any thing till the next morning, when they began to assault the city, which was defended with great bravery. Vespasian ordered the bow-men and slingers to compel the Jews to desert the walls, while himself, with a body of infantry, began an assault from an eminence convenient for battering the place; but Joseph, at the head of the Jews, made so furious an attack on the enemy, that he compelled them to retreat.

The next day the besiegers renewed the assault, and in this action both parties displayed the most distinguished instances of valour. The Jews were encouraged by the undaunted firmness and resolution with which, contrary to the most sanguine expectations, they had sustained the first assault; and the shame of having been repulsed invigorated the spirits of the Romans. Notwithstanding the great danger and difficulty of the enterprize, the latter continued to pursue their attacks with the utmost vigour, while the Jews, regardless of their great numbers and strength, made frequent sallies against them with considerable advantage.

The city of Jotapata was situated on a rock, and utterly inaccessible, except on the north, where a part of it stood on the brow of a mountain. This quarter Joseph caused to be strongly fortified, thereby precluding the enemy from taking advantage of another mountain by which it was overlooked, and which, with the other mountains adjoining, so entirely enclosed the place, that it could only be seen at a very small distance.

After several days fruitless attempt, Vespasian, finding the place so admirably situated for defence, and that he had to contend with an intrepid and determined enemy, assembled a council of his principal officers, in order to debate on the most proper means of obtaining a victory. The issue of this deliberation was, that a large terrace should be raised on that side of the city which appeared to be the least capable of resistance. Accordingly, the whole army was employed in the work, which they pursued with surprizing rapidity, and the utmost efforts of the Jews to oppose them proved ineffectual.

In the mean time Joseph ordered the wall of the city to be raised in proportion to the advance-

ment of the enemy's work. The Jews, at first, declined the undertaking, urging the impossibility of pursuing their business, as they should be continually exposed to the enemy. To remove these fears, Joseph suggested the following invention, as a defence against fire, stones and other weapons. He caused large stakes to be fixed in the ground, and raw hides of beasts to be stretched upon them, the yielding quality of which would prevent any material effect from the lances and stones, and at the same time their moisture would damp the fire of the enemy. The Jews, thinking themselves secure through Joseph's contrivance, continued indefatigably industrious in the work both night and day; and they soon erected a wall several cubits high, on which were formed towers and strong embattlements.

Vespasian now relinquished all hopes of subduing the place by storm; he therefore blocked it up, flattering himself with the expectation, that by cutting off all communication, the consequent necessities of the people would perform the business of the sword, or, at least, render them incapable of making any advantageous resistance. There was an abundant supply of corn and all other necessities in the town, excepting water, which latter article they only received from the clouds, there being neither spring or fountain within the walls of the city. The prospect of a scarcity of water induced Joseph, who was determined not to abandon himself to despair, to limit each man to a daily allowance, in consequence of which a universal discontent prevailed among the people. This circumstance could not be concealed from the Romans, who, from an adjacent hill, observed the people assembled to receive their respective portions, and were otherwise informed of the general discontent which had taken place on that occasion. Vespasian was in continual expectation of making himself master of the town; but Joseph, to convince him that he was not likely to succeed from their distress for want of water, hit upon the following stratagem: he caused great numbers of wet cloths to be hung upon the battlements, which were no sooner observed by the Romans, than they concluded a scarcity of water could not prevail in the town, as in that case they would hardly make use of such an article in so profuse a manner. In consequence of this, Vespasian, no longer entertaining hopes that the enemy would surrender through want of the necessities of life, had again recourse to arms. This proved a circumstance highly agreeable to the Jews, who, being reduced to the greatest distress, entertained the most terrible apprehensions of falling miserable sacrifices to famine, to which they infinitely preferred a glorious death in the field.

In the midst of this distress, Joseph recollected, that on the west side of the city, there was a hollow or gutter in a place so little frequented, that it was not likely to have been observed by the enemy. In consequence of this he sent messengers to the Jews without the city, requesting them to cause water and other necessities to be conveyed to him through this passage, and, as a proper security to the messengers, he ordered them to be covered with hides of beasts, and to

go on their hands and feet, that, in case of being observed by the watch, they might be mistaken for dogs and other animals.

This scheme had, for some time, the desired effect, and an intercourse was maintained between those without the city and those within, to the great satisfaction of the latter. But at length the Romans discovered the project, which they effectually destroyed by closely blocking up the passage, and thereby cutting off all communication whatever.

Joseph now perceived that it would be fruitless to attempt a longer defence of the city, and therefore he joined with several of the principal men in suggesting the means of escape. The people, suspecting on what subject they were met to deliberate, repaired in great multitudes to Joseph, earnestly supplicating, that as he was the only man from whom they could expect relief, he would not desert them in their then extremity; observing, that while he was secure they could not despair of success, and declaring that they could not die more honourably than while acting in obedience to his commands. They told him that if it should prove their misfortune to fall into the power of the Romans, he would acquire the immortal fame of having equally scorned to fly from the enemy, or desert the people under his protection: that by leaving them he would manifest a conduct similar to that of a man taking upon him the command of a ship in temperate weather, and abandoning it in a storm: they likewise added, that after losing the only man in whom they could place a confidence of success, they could no longer cherish the hope of relieving their country.

Joseph, who was unwilling to have it believed that his intention was engrossed on the means of providing for his own safety, told them, that if they were compelled to surrender, his remaining with them could not possibly operate in their favour; whereas, if he obtained his liberty, he might be able to draw an army out of Galilee sufficiently early to raise the siege; and that his continuing in the city would be productive of unfortunate instead of happy consequences, since the expectation of making him a prisoner would induce the Romans to continue a vigorous prosecution of the siege, which they might probably decline if he could effect an escape.

But these arguments, instead of reconciling the multitude, rendered them still more importunate, and with the most bitter lamentations they urgently supplicated that he would still continue his protection to them. Impressed with tenderness and gratitude towards the people, Joseph considered that if he remained in the town, they would attribute his compliance with their request to the influence they had over him, and that if he persisted in a refusal, they might probably detain him by force; and therefore, resolved to share the common danger, he addressed them as follows: "My dear friends, "and faithful countrymen, the period is arrived, "when we are required to exert our utmost bravery, since in that alone we can place our hopes "of safety. If we lose our lives our reward will "be a large share of honour, and our names will "be endeared to the latest posterity."

This address was received with universal satisfaction by the people, immediately after which Joseph, at the head of the most courageous of the Jews, assaulted the enemy's guards, whom he compelled to desert their trenches, and retreat to the camp.

Joseph and his army now defended themselves against the power of the Romans with the most astonishing power and resolution. This they continued to do for the space of forty days, when a deserter represented to Vespasian the state of the town, informing him that, through the loss of men, and the hard duty which the survivors were obliged incessantly to perform, the garrison was so reduced, that it must necessarily surrender to a vigorous attack, and more especially if advantage was to be taken of a favourable opportunity for making the assault by surprize. He likewise strongly advised the Roman general to attempt the enterprize before day-light, when the Jews would not be apprehensive of danger, and the vigilance of the guard abated by fatigue and an inclination to sleep.

Vespasian, being sensible that the Jews possessed a remarkable fidelity to each other, which the most excruciating torments could not force them to violate, was unwilling, at first, to put any confidence in what the deserter had related. He had been witness to a recent instance of the amazing constancy and resolution of the Jews, in the case of one of Joseph's people, who being made a prisoner, and interrogated respecting the state of the city, refused to divulge a single circumstance, and persisted in that resolution during the most excessive torments, and while he was undergoing the sentence of crucifixion. Considering, however, that the information of the deserter might possibly be founded in truth, and that no ill consequences were likely to ensue from his appearing to believe that to be the case, Vespasian ordered the man to be secured, and every necessary preparation to be made for the attack.

The Roman army began a silent march at an appointed hour of the night, which had been previously agreed upon agreeable to the plan laid down by the deserter. On their arrival at the walls of the town, finding the centinels asleep, they immediately dispatched them, and, without the least molestation, entered the city, followed by a large body of troops under the command of the tribune Placidus. Notwithstanding it was open day before the Romans gained possession of the fort, and made themselves masters of the town, the Jewish army was so exhausted and fatigued by incessant labour and watching, that they did not entertain the least idea of their danger till the enemy had actually gained their point; and even those who were awake were almost equal strangers to the misfortune, as they could not clearly distinguish objects on account of a thick fog which then prevailed, and continued till the whole Roman army had gained admittance into the city.

The Romans, recollecting the sufferings they had undergone during the course of the siege, laid aside every sentiment of humanity and compassion towards the besieged. They threw many of the Jews from the top of the fort, who were instantly killed by the fall; and others, who had

courage enough to make resistance, were either pressed to death by the immense crowds of the enemy, or forced down precipices, and killed by the ruins, which fell from above. Such of the guards as first observed the city to be taken fled to a turret on the walls, where they were attacked by the enemy, against whom, for some time, they made a resolute defence. Being oppressed by numbers, they offered to capitulate; but their proposals were rejected, and the whole put to the sword. Every Jew, who was met by the Romans on that day, was put to instant death; and during some following days they carefully searched for such as had concealed themselves in private places, all of whom, except women and children, they destroyed. Having thus obtained a compleat victory, Vespasian, after withdrawing his forces from the town, ordered the fortress to be burnt, which was accordingly done, and the whole city laid in ruins.

The Romans, induced partly by personal enmity, and partly by an officious zeal to ingratiate themselves into the favour of their general, assiduously employed themselves in searching every part of the adjoining country, in order to find out the leader of the Jews. It was Joseph's fortune to escape through the midst of his enemies, and to find a deep pit, having a passage leading to a spacious cavern, in which he discovered forty distinguished Jews who had there taken sanctuary, and were supplied with sufficient necessaries to last them several days. The enemy being in possession of the whole adjacent country, Joseph judged it unsafe to venture abroad by day, and therefore he left his retreat only by night, with a view of discovering if there remained any probability of effecting an escape; but finding the enemy exceeding vigilant, he repeatedly returned to the cavern despairing of success. On the third day he was betrayed by a woman, in consequence of which Vespasian dispatched Paulinus and Gallanicus, two tribunes, to the place where he was secreted, authorising them to assure Joseph, that, on condition of leaving his retreat, he should meet with a kind and honourable reception. Joseph, conscious that the injuries the Romans had sustained at his hands entitled him to punishment rather than reward, thought it unsafe to rely on Vespasian's word of honour, and therefore he declined the proposal. In consequence of this Vespasian sent another tribune, named Nicanor, who had long been intimately acquainted with Joseph, and was, in fact, his most sincere friend. Nicanor forcibly expostulated with him on the impropriety of refusing to comply with Vespasian's request: he represented to him the generosity and benevolence of the Romans towards those they conquered: that so far from Vespasian's entertaining an enmity against him, he highly esteemed him as being a man of singular intrepidity, and possessed of other eminent virtues; and that the Roman general must indisputably have favourable views, since he condescended to propose terms to a man who was already subject to his power. "Can you imagine, said Nicanor, that Vespasian would employ a friend in an office of treachery; or that I would accept from him so dishonourable a commission?"

Notwith-

Notwithstanding these remonstrances, Joseph, for some time, declined a compliance; but at length, from the very forcible arguments and advice of Nicanor, he agreed to submit. In consequence of this, his companions instantly drew their swords, and threatened, if he surrendered to put him to death. Joseph, being apprehensive that they might carry their designs into execution, was desirous of avoiding so horrid an intention; to effect which he addressed them as follows: "Why, my good friends, do you suffer yourselves to be so far transported by the violence of passion, as to cherish the idea of separating the soul and body, which are so intimately united by nature? To fall by the hand of a victor in a war maintained according to the laws of arms is, without dispute, a glorious fate. I should make no greater difficulty of taking away my own life than of requesting a Roman to perform that office: but if the Romans are inclined to shew mercy to an enemy, will reason justify that enemy in having no mercy on himself? No death can be more honourable than that of the man who yields his life to the superior power of an adversary that means to deprive him of the inestimable blessing of liberty. But the Romans wish not our deaths; and all animosity should now cease; for the cause of our contention is at an end. The man who rejects life when his duty requires him to preserve it, is as pusillanimous as he who, in opposition to the dictates of honour, trembles to meet his fate. Is it not from the fear of death alone, that we hesitate to yield to the Romans? Shall we precipitate ourselves into certain destruction for the purpose of avoiding a threatened danger, which probably may not arrive? If you conceive that we ought to die to avoid slavery, I must request you to recollect, that we enjoy not liberty in the miserable situation to which we are now reduced. If you suppose him to be a brave man who deprives himself of life, I would ask what opinion you would form of the commander of a vessel who, during a calm, should sink his ship from an apprehension that a tempest might arise? The desire of preserving life is a principle implanted in the whole animal creation; and therefore to deprive ourselves of existence is to violate the order of nature, and offer a sacrilegious insult to God. If we desire to live, may we not indulge that desire, since we have given exemplary proofs of our courage and virtue? But if we are resolved to die, let us fall by the hands of our conquerors. We shall have no cause for regret if the Romans prove treacherous; but on the contrary, we shall resign our lives with pleasure, since we shall enjoy the satisfaction of knowing that the perfidy of the enemy must necessarily diminish the glory of their victory, and render them infamous to the latest posterity."

Joseph imagined that these arguments would have induced the Jews to relinquish the determination of putting an end to his life; but in

this he found himself mistaken, for instead of appeasing, his address provoked them to the utmost extravagance of rage: they approached him with their swords drawn, upbraided him in the most severe terms as being of a contemptibly irresolute disposition, and threatened him with instant death. Thus situated, Joseph addressed his companions in the most soothing manner, which seldom fails to gain respect from those who have been accustomed to obey: he called one by his name, took another by the hand, and endeavoured to engage the attention of the rest by arguments and such other means as he conceived to be best adapted for obtaining the end he had in view. Thus, by a singular address in applying to the various humours and dispositions of his companions, Joseph averted the danger that threatened him. The rage of the Jews subsided, their esteem and veneration for their general revived, and they freely gave him his liberty to act as he should think proper. Being thus relieved from the extremity to which he was reduced by the Romans on one hand, and by his own countrymen on the other, Joseph surrendered himself to Nicanor, who immediately conducted him to Vespasian.

The desire of seeing Joseph appear before the Roman general caused prodigious numbers of people to assemble, some of whom rejoiced to see that he was alive, while others vented menaces and the most bitter execrations against him. Those who were sufficiently near to observe his person recollected the many extraordinary incidents of his life, and reflecting on his then situation, were greatly astonished on the comparison. Notwithstanding the inveteracy which the Roman general had entertained against Joseph, they tenderly compassionated him in his captivity: but Titus was most particularly affected, for on account of his advanced age, and the unconquerable dignity of his mind in the most extreme dangers and distresses, he entertained a great veneration for Joseph, whose former elevated station and great exploits, together with the humiliating condition to which he was now reduced, he most seriously considered, and then proceeded to make some reflections on the chance of war, and the mutability of human affairs. Those who heard Titus adopted his sentiments; and he greatly contributed towards the preservation of Joseph, by influencing Vespasian in his favour.

Vespasian intimated his intentions of sending Joseph to Nero, and ordered him to be kept a close prisoner. In consequence of this Joseph requested to have an audience with Vespasian, which being granted, he was conducted to the general's apartment, from whence every person was dismissed, except Titus and two of his friends. In the presence of these Joseph, addressing himself to Vespasian, spoke as follows: "You see me here, sir, your prisoner, and perhaps you consider me in no other character; but believe me I am no less than a messenger sent by Providence to impart to you a matter of the highest importance *.

I do not

* While Joseph was with his companions in the cavern,

he had a most remarkable vision, in which were communicated

“ I not been charged with this commission I
 “ should have acted consistent with the character
 “ of a Jewish general, and have died rather than
 “ have submitted to be made a prisoner. It is
 “ unnecessary to send me to Nero, since Vespasian is so near succeeding to the empire,
 “ which, upon his decease, will devolve on his
 “ son Titus. Let me be kept a prisoner, and
 “ guarded with unremitting circumspection: I
 “ only request to remain the prisoner of Vespasian, who, by the right of conquest, is become the master of my life and liberty, and
 “ will, in a short time, be advanced to the sovereignty of the Roman empire. If it shall
 “ hereafter appear that I have made use of any
 “ artifice to induce you to repose confidence in
 “ an imposter, you will perform an act of justice
 “ in subjecting me to the most severe and exemplary punishment.”

At first Vespasian considered Joseph's address as a mere fiction, contrived for the purpose of obtaining his favour; but experiencing certain indications, and finding them exactly correspond with what Joseph had related, his doubts gradually subsided, and he gave full confidence to the prediction. One of the persons who was permitted to be present at the interview observed to Joseph, that since he pretended to a knowledge of future events, he requested to be informed by what means it happened that he remained ignorant of the destruction of Jotapata, and of his own captivity. To which Joseph replied, he had predicted to the inhabitants that the town would be conquered, and himself made a prisoner by the enemy. In consequence of this reply, Vespasian ordered a secret enquiry to be made among the Jewish prisoners relative to the truth of what he had asserted: this was accordingly done, and the Jews confirming every particular related by Joseph, the general was induced to judge more favourably of what he had foretold respecting himself.

Joseph continued to be guarded with the greatest circumspection; but the irksomeness of confinement was, in a great degree, mitigated by his being allowed every accommodation, and convenience, together with the particular respect and kindness which he received from Titus.

After the conquest of Jotapata, and the total destruction of that city, Vespasian repaired with his army to Cæsarea, where he took up his winter quarters; but that he might not overburthen the inhabitants of that city, he sent the fifth and tenth legions to Scythopolis.

Early in the ensuing spring Vespasian renewed his operations, against the Jews. He sent his son Titus at the head of a considerable army into one part of Judea, whilst himself went into another; and between them they reduced the most principal places in that country, the inhabitants of some of which quietly submitted; but others after holding out with the utmost resistance in

their power were conquered, and great numbers put to the sword.

After these conquests Vespasian returned to Cæsarea, where he formed the resolution of laying siege to Jerusalem; but while he was making the necessary preparations for this purpose, he received an account of the death of Nero, after a reign of thirteen years and eight days. In consequence of this intelligence, Vespasian suspended his preparations for the expedition towards Jerusalem. Finding that Galba was destined to succeed to the empire, he thought it would not be a prudent measure to take so important a step without express orders for so doing. He therefore dispatched his son Titus to wait on Galba, at once to congratulate him on the succession to the empire, and to take his directions how to act in the then exigency of affairs. King Agrippa (who was at this time in Cæsarea) being desirous to embark with Titus on this interesting occasion, they set sail in the same vessel; but while they were on their voyage (which was exceeding tedious owing to the contrariety of the wind) and near to Achaia, they received intelligence that Galba was slain, after having governed only seven months, and that Otho succeeded him, who reigned only three months. This change in affairs did not prevent Agrippa from prosecuting his journey from Achaia to Rome; but Titus sailed from thence to Syria, and proceeded with all expedition to his father at Cæsarea.

A short time after the return of Titus to Cæsarea, Vespasian received intelligence that a civil war had broke out in Rome, occasioned by Vitellius, a daring and enterprising man, who, on the death of Otho, had, with the assistance of a great body of German soldiers, possessed himself of the sovereignty of the empire. Vespasian was a man who had a just opinion of the respect that should be shewn to superiors, and was as well calculated to obey as to command; but notwithstanding this, he was greatly chagrined to acknowledge the supreme authority of him who rather seized the empire as a plunder, than became possessed of it as an honour. In a word, this astonishing change in the public affairs affected him to such a degree, that he could no longer entertain any idea of prosecuting foreign wars, when his country at home was distracted by the most disagreeable circumstances. Yet, though his indignation on the one hand urged him to a speedy revenge, yet on the other he was deterred from putting his design into execution, by the consideration of the difficulties and hazards that would attend so long a journey in the midst of winter, besides the probability of many unexpected incidents which might happen before he could arrive in Italy.

While Vespasian was debating this subject in his mind, the officers of his army (all of whom were thoroughly acquainted with the revolutions which had taken place in Rome) associated together,

cated to him the success and grandeur which the Romans should experience, and the miseries which should attend the Jews. It was likewise revealed to him that Vespasian should

become emperor, and that himself should be the messenger of that intelligence; and this it was that made him so strenuous in requesting his companions to spare his life.

gether, and discoursed with the utmost freedom on the affairs of the state and government. Among other things they exclaimed most violently against the German soldiers, who were the protectors of Vitellius, ridiculing them as a band of dissolute and effeminate creatures, who would be afraid to face even the usual terrors of war. "What (said they) shall people like these dispose of empires, or rather sell them to the highest bidder? Is it possible for them to imagine that we, who have undergone all the fatigue attending excessive labour, till we are grown old in the use of arms; that we will ever submit to be governed by an emperor chosen by them, when we have a prince of our own who is much more worthy of the government? Besides, if we omit the present opportunity of testifying our gratitude for the numerous obligations we owe to the generosity of Vespasian, it is not very probable that a similar prospect of paying him the proper compliment will ever again offer. Exclusive of these considerations, the personal merit of Vespasian hath as much better qualified him for the dignity of emperor than that of Vitellius, as our merits have qualified us for the choice, beyond that of those who have elected him. With regard to Vespasian, there can be no debate, or competition; for the senate and people of Rome are entirely in his interest; nor would they even listen to an insinuation of the licentiousness and debauches of Vitellius being put in competition with the modest and temperate behaviour of Vespasian; for this, in fact, would be to prefer an abandoned tyrant to a humane prince. After all we have said, let it be considered what a ridiculous figure we should make, and how egregiously we should be duped; we, who, of all men living, have the greatest obligations to Vespasian, if the senate themselves should elect him emperor, and thus take out of our hands the merit of so distinguished an action, while we are idly debating on the method of proceeding in such an exigency."

To this purpose was the conversation of the officers under Vespasian. Their first meetings were held in a secret manner; but having publicly declared their sentiments to the soldiers, all of whom agreed with them in opinion, they resolved to make choice of Vespasian as emperor, and entreated him to take under his protection an empire that was shaken to its foundation. Vespasian had, for a long time, been the support of the empire; but he was so far from being ambitious of the dignity of emperor, that he absolutely declined it, declaring that he chose rather to continue in that line of life to which he had been accustomed, than accept of the pomp and dignity to which he was invited. But the more desirous Vespasian was to avoid this compliment, the more earnestly did the people press his acceptance of it; till at length, on his repeated refusal, they advanced to him with drawn swords, and threatened his destruction if he any longer refused accepting an honour of which he was so deserving. Still, however, for a time, he refused; but at length yielded to an importunity that was not to be resisted.

The government of the empire was no sooner accepted by Vespasian, than Mucianus, and the other officers, joined with the whole body of the army in requesting that he would immediately march his forces against Vitellius: but Vespasian thought it would be most prudent first to bring over to his interest the people of Alexandria, by means of which he should obtain such advantages as would not only secure himself, but, in all probability, crown his enterprize with success. Egypt, on account of the prodigious quantity of corn which it produced, was deemed one of the most important branches of the empire: wherefore Vespasian was of opinion that if he could but possess himself of that country, the people of Rome might be induced rather to expel Vitellius, than run the risk of starving if they refused so to do, which would be the natural consequence if they could not obtain proper assistance from Egypt.

These observations being highly approved of by the officers, Vespasian immediately wrote a letter to Tiberius, the then governor of Alexandria, informing him, that at the importunity of his soldiers he had been prevailed on to take the government into his own hands, and that he thought he could not act more prudently than to request the favour of his advice and assistance in the office of administration. Alexander had no sooner read this letter than, with the utmost freedom and good-will, he took an oath of fidelity to Vespasian, and caused the like to be done by all the inhabitants of the city. This oath was taken with every possible demonstration of joy and esteem; for they were previously informed of the good intentions of the new emperor, and confided in his virtue and honour. Tiberius made a generous use of the power entrusted to him for the public welfare, and immediately began to make the necessary preparations for receiving Vespasian.

Intelligence of Vespasian's being advanced to the dignity of ruling the empire was propagated with the utmost speed through every part of the eastern country; and wherever this news arrived, it was so grateful to the people, that the inhabitants of the several cities kept a holiday on the occasion, and offered up their prayers that the reign of Vespasian might be long and happy. Several ambassadors, from Syria and other provinces, waited on Vespasian, with congratulatory addresses on his being appointed to the government of the empire. Among the rest was Mucianus, the governor of Syria, who gave him the utmost assurance of the loyalty and affection of the people in general, which they had testified, by cheerfully taking the oath of fidelity to his person and authority.

These favourable circumstances struck a deep impression on the mind of Vespasian, who could not help seriously reflecting that they had less the appearance of being the work of chance, than the immediate effect of a disposing Providence; and he thought it appeared that he had not been raised to so distinguished an elevation by the power of fortune, but by Divine interposition. Reflecting on this subject there occurred to his mind several prophetic hints which had happened in the course of his life, all tending to the same

same end. Among the rest he could not but recur to the circumstance of Joseph, having, while he remained a prisoner, and during the life of Nero, called him by the title of emperor. This singular prediction had great influence on the mind of Vespasian, and the greater, because the party was still his prisoner: wherefore, sending for Mucianus, and others of his officers, he spoke to them of the singular courage and bravery of Joseph, and how gallantly he had behaved himself at the siege of Jotapata. After this he mentioned several other particulars respecting him, and at length adverted to the subject of his predictions: "Those (said he) I at first imagined to be nothing more than contrivances for his own preservation; but the event has proved that they were actually the result of Divine Providence: wherefore, my friends, it would be an indelible disgrace in me longer to detain, in the abject condition of a prisoner, the person who first declared to me the news of my advancement."

Having said this, Vespasian instantly sent for Joseph, and, in the presence of the company, restored him to his liberty. From this instance of gratitude in Vespasian, his officers formed the most favourable idea of their own situation, thinking that they, who were his faithful friends and servants, should experience every indulgence under so kind a master. During this scene Titus was present, who, in a most submissive manner, hinted to his father, that the single granting of liberty to Joseph was leaving the generosity of his plan incomplete: that his chains ought not only to be taken off, but broken, for if that was not done, the dishonour of his imprisonment would remain with him, though his person was restored to liberty. Vespasian, coinciding in this opinion, gave immediate orders that his chains should be cut to pieces; which circumstance not only gave the most extensive freedom to Joseph, but so raised his reputation as a prophet, that every person was disposed to give credit to any of his future predictions in as full and ample a manner as they had done to what he had already foretold.

A general council was now held to consider the most proper measures to be taken in the then exigency of affairs, in which it was resolved that Titus should prosecute the war against the Jews, and that Vespasian should go to Alexandria, and use such methods as he thought adviseable for suppressing the disturbances at Rome, occasioned by the usurper Vitellius.

On Vespasian's arrival at Alexandria he was received by the people of that city with the utmost demonstrations of joy; and measures were instantly concerted for reducing Vitellius, and quieting the disturbances which then took place at Rome. For this purpose he dispatched a considerable army of cavalry and foot, under the command of Mucianus, through Cappadocia and Phrygia into Italy, being afraid to trust his troops by sea during the winter season.

In the meantime Antonius Primus (an excellent soldier who had been banished by Nero, but restored by Galba, a friend to Vespasian) marched at the head of the third legion to give battle to

Vitellius, the latter of whom being informed of his intentions, sent a strong army, under the command of Cæcinnus to oppose him. As soon as Cæcinnus met Antonius (which was on the confines of Italy) he was struck with terror at the numbers, order and discipline of his army. He was totally at a loss how to act: he did not dare to risk a battle, nor could he think of running away from them; and therefore, he chose rather to be considered as a deserter than a coward. Having assembled his centurions, tribunes, and all the rest of his officers, he exerted the utmost power of his oratory in a declaration of the different degrees of merit between Vespasian and Vitellius. The one he extolled to the highest degree, and depreciated the character of the other; and all this with a fixed design to prevail on the soldiers of Vitellius to take part with Vespasian. The speech he made on this occasion was to this effect: "Vitellius possesses nothing more than the name of an emperor; whereas the claim of Vespasian is not only founded on the strictest equity, but his very person is stamped with the indubitable marks of the imperial character. Besides, the troops of Vespasian are so numerous and well-chosen, that it will be in vain for us to think of entering into a contest with him. This being the case, had we not better now act the same part, as of our own choice and free-will, that we shall otherwise be compelled to do through the force of mere necessity? While I say this, I am certain that Vespasian is able to carry his design into execution without our aid or assistance; but Vitellius, so far from being able to protect his adherents, is by no means in a condition to defend himself."

These arguments were urged with so much zeal, that Cæcinnus obtained the point at which he laboured, and prevailed on his troops to go over to Antonius. But on the following night Cæcinnus's people, partly repenting of what they had done, and partly in fear of the consequence, in case Vitellius should prove successful in the contest, advanced in a rage, with drawn swords, to dispatch Cæcinnus, which they would have certainly done, had not the tribunes strongly interposed in his favour. Hereupon, they desisted from taking away his life, but insisted that, as a traitor, he should be immediately sent in chains to Vitellius.

As soon as Antonius was informed of this event, he immediately went with a party to attack them as deserters. For some time they made a faint resistance, but receded on the first violent attack, and fled towards Cremona. Antonius, interposing with his cavalry between the fugitives and the town, and entirely surrounding them, destroyed great numbers on the spot, and pursuing the rest, put the whole to the sword, except their general Cæcinnus, whom he set at liberty, and dispatched to Vespasian with an account of the victory.

After this defeat, Antonius marched with his army towards Rome, information of which being made known to Sabinus, the brother of Vespasian, he that same night assembled the city guards, and possessed himself of the capital. On the following day great numbers of persons,

of distinguished rank, joined his party, among whom was Domitian, brother to Titus, and younger son to Vespasian.

Vitellius paid little regard to the proceedings of Antonius, the principal view of his resentment being directed towards Sabinus, and the other persons who had joined with him in the revolt; and being by nature of a savage and ferocious disposition, but particularly so to those of distinguished rank, he dispatched a body of his own troops to attack them. In this enterprize the most singular instances of bravery were displayed on both sides; but in the end, the troops of Vitellius became victorious. Domitian and other Romans of the first rank, made their escape, but the greater part of the people were destroyed, and the victors, after plundering the temple of Janus, burnt it to the ground. With respect to Sabinus, he was made prisoner, and conducted to Vitellius, who ordered him immediately to be put to death.

The next day Antonius arrived with his army, when a desperate battle ensued between him and the troops of Vitellius. The forces of Antonius being divided, they engaged in three different parts of the city at the same time, and the contest was continued for that day without any material advantage on either side. Early the next morning Mucianus with his army entered Rome, and joining that of Antonius, the attack was renewed with the utmost vigour, and the troops of Vitellius being defeated were all put to the sword.

Thus was this mighty city, taken by her own natural subjects; and as it was fatal to many thousands, so likewise was it to Vitellius himself, whom the soldiers dragged out of his palace, (and without hearkening to any entreaties, binding his hands behind him, and throwing an halter about his neck) drew him into the public forum, thro' the main street called Via Sacra. As he went along they used the most opprobrious language, and treated him with the greatest indignity they could project: they pelted him with dung and filth, and held the point of a sword under his chin to prevent his concealing his face. At length they conducted him to the common place of execution, where, with many blows and wounds, they dispatched him in the 56th year of his age, and after a short reign of only eight months. Having wreaked their vengeance thus, they dragged his body from the spot where they had killed him, and threw it into the river Tiber; after which they not only made his brother, and only son, but likewise all whom they met with of his party, victims to their resentment.

As soon as the fury of this carnage was over, the Roman senate assembled, and, with unanimous consent, not only declared Vespasian emperor, but conferred the title of Cæsar upon his two sons Titus and Domitian; nominating the former to be consul with his father for the ensuing year, and the latter to be prætor with consular power. They likewise rewarded Mucianus and Antonius, with several others, for contributing to this happy revolution; and dispatched couriers to Vespasian at Alexandria, to tender him their homage and obedience, and to desire

his speedy return to Rome. On this occasion the people made two festivals, one for their deliverance from the tyranny of Vitellius, and the other for the happy advancement of Vespasian to the government of the empire.—But it is now time to return to Titus.

Before Vespasian left Judea, he, by the advice of his council, committed the management of the war against the Jews to his son Titus, well knowing his extraordinary valour and skill for such an undertaking. Himself had reduced most of the country, except Jerusalem; but Jerusalem was the capital city, fortified with three walls on every side, except where it was fenced with deep vallies, having the castle of Antonia, the temple, the palace of Acra, the towers on mount Sion, and several other places almost impregnable; so that great consultation, and a preparation of many materials, were required to carry on such a siege.

The inhabitants of Jerusalem had been, for a long time, in the most distressed situation, owing to the several parties and factions which had taken possession of different parts of the city, and were not only murdering each other, but, in their rage and madness, destroyed such a quantity of provisions as might have served the city for several months.

Jerusalem was involved in these sad circumstances, when Titus, with a powerful army, and all kinds of warlike engines, approached, and sat down within six or seven furlongs of the city a little before the feast of the passover. By these means he shut up an infinite number of people who had come from all parts to that solemnity, which, in a short time, occasioned a great consumption of their provisions.

On the first appearance of so formidable an army, the several factions unanimously agreed to oppose it; in consequence of which they sallied out with great resolution and fury, and putting the Romans to disorder, obliged them to abandon their camp, and fly to the mountains. But the Jews were at last repulsed, and driven into the city by Titus, who particularly distinguished himself as a courageous and expert warrior.

When Titus had properly placed his engines (which was not done without great opposition) he battered the outward walls, and, on the third day of May, making a breach, entered, and took possession, of the northern quarter of the city, as far as the castle of Antonia, and the valley of Kedron. Having done this, he gave the besieged all possible assurances of pardon and civil treatment if they would but submit; but they judging his offer to be the effect of cowardice, refused to accept of any terms or conditions whatever.

On the fifth day after this Titus broke through the second wall, and though the besieged made several sallies, and drove him out again, yet he recovered the place, and possessed himself of the lower city.

Though Titus was now thoroughly convinced, in his own mind, that he could by force of arms, easily make a compleat conquest of the city, yet he was willing, if possible to effect it without any farther loss of blood. He therefore, in the first place, sent a messenger to the Jews, requesting that